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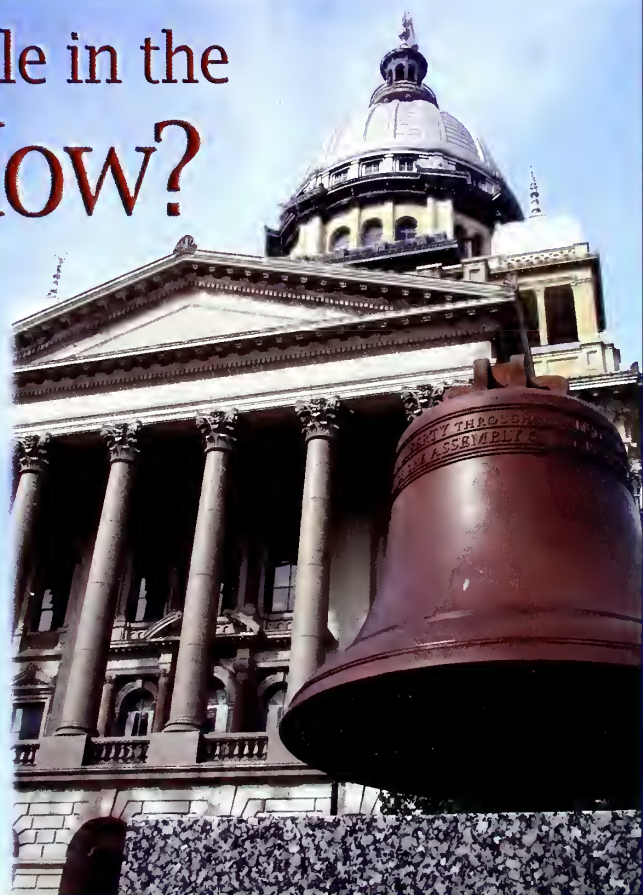
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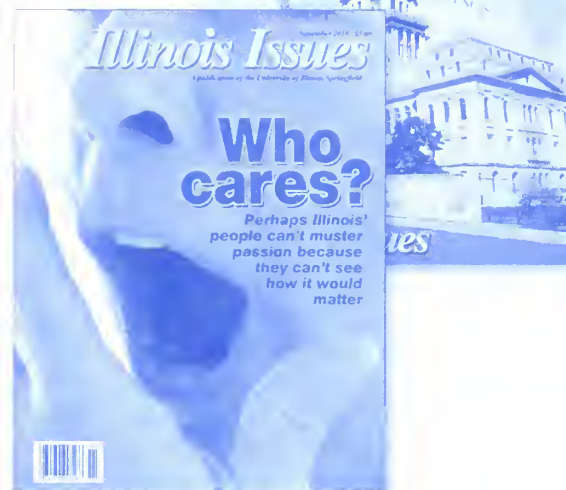


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fringes. But every time I venture out there, I get pulled back to the middle. I swung from card-carrying Young Republican to student radical during the Vietnam War — that was a journey, I'll tell you — but when I graduated and got a real job, I began to see the good and bad points of both the right and the left.

Since then, I've kind of mixed their ideas around and tempered them down. I'm not in favor of a nanny state, but I do think government can

play a positive role in our lives. I'm all for capitalism, but in creating success stories, it also spawns failures, and I think we have an obligation to help those who are less fortunate.

I can't toe any political party line, either. The hard-line Republicans, it seems to me, are too often about protecting the interests of the rich and don't seem to care much what happens

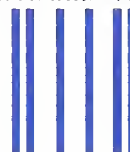
lonely here in the center — closely surrounded by so many who are absolutely firm in their beliefs — but it is, kind of. It seems that the extremes are having all the fun, and the few of us in the middle are left to sweep up the mess when the parties move elsewhere.

And, believe me, I'm not talking about representing any Silent Majority. Been there, seen that, had to look up "nattering nabobs." (Also felt obligated to check to see if I really had chosen to pursue a craft that was an



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Illinois Issues



Dana Heupel



A view from the middle

by Dana Heupel

Confession is good for the soul, they say, so I'm going to reveal my darkest secret. The thought alone is more than a little scary, but if it will help me recover ...

OK, here goes.

"My name is Dana, and ... I'm ... uh ... a ... political moderate."

There, I finally said it out loud. I do feel better, but I can see the look of disgust on everyone's faces. "White bread," they're thinking. "Middle-of-the-road Midwesterner. Not truly committed to any cause. Afraid to take a stand."

Lord, I've tried to live on the fringes. But every time I venture out there, I get pulled back to the middle. I swung from card-carrying Young Republican to student radical during the Vietnam War — that was a journey, I'll tell you — but when I graduated and got a real job, I began to see the good and bad points of both the right and the left.

Since then, I've kind of mixed their ideas around and tempered them down. I'm not in favor of a nanny state, but I do think government can

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I can't toe any political party line, either. The hard-line Republicans, it seems to me, are too often about protecting the interests of the rich and don't seem to care much what happens

to us lesser folk. And inflexible Democrats, well, they think they know how you should live your life and like to make a lot of laws so you'll do it their way.

The former side also seems to think it owns patriotism, while the latter stakes its claim to compassion. But from where I stand ... um, or sit ... it seems to me that both are usually just out to further their own self-centered agendas.

And lately, I really can't hear what either side is saying over all this shouting. Frankly, y'all frighten me a little.

You wouldn't think it would be lonely here in the center — closely surrounded by so many who are absolutely firm in their beliefs — but it is, kind of. It seems that the extremes are having all the fun, and the few of us in the middle are left to sweep up the mess when the parties move elsewhere.

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As for me, I don't want to be left behind, but I'm just not absolutely convinced I'm right. Do we really have to be one or the other?

"effete corps of impudent snobs."
Determined it wasn't.)

No, I'm harkening back to the day when a good number of people plowed the ground somewhere between liberal Republicans and conservative Democrats — back to the time when those terms weren't oxymorons ... er ... self-contradictory. (Hmmm. Maybe I'll have to revisit that snob thing.)

Now, it seems as if most everyone has chosen to work the political edges. And in doing so, they're fleeing the center — or decimating it. John McCain, whom many in his party considered a liberal Republican, veered sharply to the right in the run-up to his Senate re-election. And President Barack Obama, who arguably has moved toward the center, has come under fire from both his earlier detractors and supporters for not being far enough out there.

As for me, I don't want to be left behind, but I'm just not absolutely convinced I'm right. Do we really have to be one or the other?

Is being a moderate really so awful and old-fashioned and namby-pamby? Because from my spot in the middle, it seems that we desperately need someone to moderate this furious argument between the extremes that is tearing this state and this country apart. And what better venue for all sides to meet for that discussion, which is so vital to solving the immense problems we face, than right here in the middle ground?

Please welcome several new members to the *Illinois Issues* staff.

Stacie Lewis, who earned her master's degree in communications from the University of Illinois Springfield in December 2009, is our circulation

fulfillment assistant and will also do some writing and photography.

Kendall Cramer, who is pursuing a master's degree in public administration at the university, is our graduate research assistant. He writes articles for our Briefly and People sections, helps check the facts for everything we publish and is the editor of our upcoming *Roster of State Government Officials*.

Lauren Johnson is our graduate intern at the Capitol this semester. She will work with Statehouse Bureau Chief Jamey Dunn to report on state government. She is pursuing a master's degree through the highly regarded Public Affairs Reporting program at UIS.

And Jessica Odigie, who is working toward a degree in legal studies, is our student assistant. She helps with office and clerical work and is essential to keeping things running smoothly at our office.

We at *Illinois Issues* are deeply saddened by the November 15 death of Larry Hansen, the chairman of the magazine's advisory board and a strong advocate for clean and efficient government.

I first met Larry about 15 years ago, when he was director of the Joyce Foundation's Money and Politics program. The foundation underwrote a book based on a series of newspaper articles I coordinated on the relationship between campaign contributions and state contracts and legislation.

Our paths crossed several times in the ensuing years but converged when I came to this magazine in 2008. Larry was a trusted friend and adviser and a dedicated supporter of *Illinois Issues*. I sought his counsel many times concerning matters at the magazine, and he always was able to point me in the right direction. I will miss him sorely and offer our deepest sympathies to his family and many friends. An article about his many accomplishments and remarkable life can be found on page 34. □

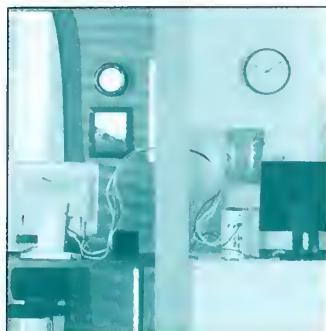
Dana Heupel can be reached at heupel.dana@uis.edu.

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Jamey Dunn



New year signals time for budget action

by Jamey Dunn

A new legislative session and Gov. Pat Quinn's first term as the elected governor of Illinois begin this month. While the legislature passed some historic measures during its veto session, little was done to address the state's gaping budget deficit and crushing backlog of unpaid bills.

Both the lawmakers and the governor need to make some resolutions for the New Year, stick to them and put some solutions in place.

While Quinn has been no stranger to criticism, from his own party as well as from opponents, he managed to surprise many of his detractors by winning a close race to hang onto his office.

Former Gov. Jim Edgar, who has supported Quinn's call for an income tax increase as part of a plan to solve the deficit, says the win could go a long way when it comes to Quinn's ability to move his legislative agenda.

"I think it's a huge advantage to him now that ... he won an election. That means a lot when you're dealing with the legislature. ... No matter what they think about you, you're going to be governor for four years."

Edgar adds that Quinn has the advantage of coming into a difficult job with two years of experience already under his belt.

Quinn — perhaps one of the only politicians in Illinois viewed as honest enough to share the top of the ticket with

Heading into the new session, Quinn needs to focus squarely on the budget. Other issues have to take a back seat for a while.

Rod Blagojevich and come out without the stain of corruption — did admirable work as lieutenant governor. Illinois' Constitution places few responsibilities with the office. It is what the man or woman holding the position makes it. For Quinn, it was a platform for good deeds, such as raising support for military families and creating awareness about the environment.

Those are ideas he has continued to champion as governor. While they are noble causes that should not be abandoned, Quinn needs to start seeing the bigger picture. He has more than once answered difficult questions on issues, such as the budget, by bringing the topic around to those pet causes, leaving reporters and voters scratching their heads about his priorities and plans for the state's future.

Heading into the new legislative session, Quinn needs to focus squarely on

the budget. Other issues have to take a back seat for a while. Once he tightens his focus, he should bring in a crack team to help overcome the current crisis.

This is just what Adlai Stevenson II, another idealist who lacked some aspects of political savvy, did when he took the office after the 1948 election and was faced with cleaning up corruption. Cynthia Grant Bowman recounts in the biography *Dawn Clark Netsch: A Political Life* that Stevenson recruited a young Abner Mikva, as well as many "nationally recognized" economists and experts, to his staff and cabinet. Netsch, still in law school at the time, was also among his supporters. Bowman writes: "Together with those he had recruited, Stevenson accomplished a great deal over the four years he was governor. ... One of [his] most important legacies for Illinois was the network of young people he either brought into or inspired to enter public life."

Quinn is known to keep a tight circle of people he can trust. But the state's obstacles are too great to be faced by friends, holdovers and loyalists alone. We need some fresh perspectives. And now that Quinn's future is certain, he will likely find more applicants willing to rise to the challenges Illinois currently presents.

Quinn has reportedly asked top appointees for their resignation letters, signaling that this longstanding com-

plaint of Statehouse watchers may be sinking in.

The perception that Quinn reacts rather than leads has also dogged him throughout his time in office. Quinn's stances on ethics legislation and tax plans seemed to change hourly in the waning days of last year's spring legislative session. In all fairness, he was having difficulty finding support from legislators in his own party and seemed to be trying to show that he was open to compromise. But in the end, his behavior came across more like a waffle than an olive branch.

He also unveils new ideas in a way that does not seem planned. He might blurt something out about a tax plan at an unrelated news conference. As a reporter, I can't say I mind this, but it doesn't seem to help him move his agenda. Reporters who follow up on the announcements find there is no political appetite for them in the legislature.

"Sometimes, I think he would say things, and people would react, and then he'd be surprised, and then he'd change. You don't want to keep changing your position," Edgar notes.

Once Quinn gets a solid team in place, he needs to come up with a realistic budget plan and stick to it. If changes are needed, make them deliberately so it is clear they are the result of negotiations and not flip-flopping. Float preliminary ideas to lawmakers personally, or through staff members, instead of in headlines, so not every dud has to see daylight.

"I think it gives him a great opportunity to almost start with a clean slate in some ways. And learn from his mistakes. ... We all make mistakes and hopefully we all grow, and hopefully he'll grow. And he'll learn that maybe some of the things he did the first two years, maybe he ought to do different. And now he's got a great chance to do them different," Edgar says.

Quinn did not get much of a honeymoon period when he first took office. But at the start of his new term, he may get a short respite with the understanding that he must move on from mistakes of the past and take ownership of the office. Just as he may now be able to command more control over state government as the elected governor, the buck will now also stop with him.

Once Quinn gets a solid team in place, he needs to come up with a realistic budget plan and stick to it.

As Edgar characterized the situation: "Now it's his mess. It's no longer Blagojevich's mess. ... Now whatever happens, it's on his watch."

Quinn should grab the chance to work with both parties and start building a recovery plan. However, he can't do it on his own, and the legislature needs to make some changes, as well.

Speaking realistically about the budget crisis would be a good start. Neither voters nor the state economy would tolerate a plan that relies solely on cuts or new taxes to get the state out of the deficit. Some Republicans call for such cuts as selling state planes that may have symbolic importance but will do little to fill the gaping budget hole. Some Democrats say spending is not the problem, while failing to point out that any tax increase discussed so far would not bring in enough cash, either.

Lawmakers have to stop playing politics with math and willfully ignoring the scope of the problem.

Rushville Democratic Sen. John Sullivan, who chairs a Senate appropriation committee and sat on the Senate Deficit Reduction Committee last year, says legislators should do more to explain Illinois' finances to constituents back home, though it may be a difficult sell.

"It's a tough environment out there. People are dissatisfied both at the state and the federal level. The economy is still just barely chugging along. ... When I hear people say, 'Don't raise my taxes,' and I hear other people say, 'Don't cut services,' my response is, you can't have it both ways," he says.

Sullivan thinks legislators should explain the reality and possible outcomes of both cuts and tax increases without a political spin and then listen to their constituents. "We can sit here and have our

deficit reduction committees ... but until the everyday person, living and working in their communities, until they realize they personally understand what the consequences are, all the other stuff doesn't really sink in."

Edgar agrees that it will take both cuts and a tax increase, as well as the cooperation of both parties. "I'm going to encourage Democrats and Republicans to sit down and try to get along. ... If that happens, I'm much more optimistic that they'll figure out some compromise."

He adds that Republican or Democrat, all Illinoisans should pull for Quinn on some level. "I'm very hopeful that he'll be successful," Edgar says. "We all have a lot vested in a governor doing well in this state regardless of his politics."

Lawmakers were hesitant to take up any controversial issues before the election, but now Sullivan warns that the time for action on the budget is at hand.

"We didn't get in this situation overnight. We're not going to get out of it overnight. But the fact is, every day that we wait, we are digging ourselves deeper and deeper and deeper into this hole. And the sooner that we make the decision, whether it be cuts or taxes or a combination of both, once we make that decision, then we're going to be able to start digging our way out. But we keep delaying."

While lawmakers should speak in realistic terms about the budget picture instead of repeating useless party lines, voters must resolve to be informed, as well.

People need to realize that they should likely expect fewer services from their financially strapped state, especially if they cannot support a tax increase. They should also know that some cuts will have to come in education, social services and health care — areas that most people care about and that make up the bulk of state spending.

Senate Minority Leader Christine Radogno summed up well the need for an informed electorate: "The problem we have is when people aren't engaged, and they make up their mind on a 30-second commercial. And then they wake up and say, 'Oh how did we get this kind of governance?' It's because you let it happen." □

BRIEFLY

Legislature votes for civil unions

Photograph by Jeff Schuette, courtesy of Illinois House Democrats

By next June, same-sex and heterosexual couples will likely have the option of civil unions in Illinois.

The General Assembly passed **Senate Bill 1716** in December, and Gov. Pat Quinn has vowed to sign the measure into law.

Couples with civil unions would be entitled to rights such as the ability to be involved in their partners' health and end-of-life decisions. The legislation also would apply to family law issues, such as shared property rights, court intervention in divorce proceedings and child custody cases and protection under domestic violence laws.

"Every state entitlement or right that comes with marriage will now apply to civil unions," says Jason Pierceson, a legal studies professor at the University of Illinois Springfield and author of *Same-Sex Marriage in the Americas: Policy Innovation for Same-Sex Relationships*.

However, Pierceson points out that civil unions will not cover more than 1,000 federal benefits. For example, a couple in a civil union could file a joint state income tax return but not a joint federal return.

Some opponents argue that the legislation is same-sex marriage by another name or a stepping-stone toward eventually legalizing same-sex marriage.

Sen. John Sullivan, a Democrat from Rushville, says he voted against the bill because many of his constituents do not support it, and he couldn't determine a difference between the civil unions described in the measure and marriage.

"The next bill will be legalizing marriage between ... members of the same sex, and I just think that's wrong. ... Just call me an old-fashioned traditionalist," says Rep. Ron Stevens, a Greenville Republican.

Chicago Democratic Rep. Greg Harris, a sponsor of the bill, points to the religious protections in the measure, which he says ensure that no church opposed to civil unions would be required to hold ceremonies to recognize them.



State Rep. Deb Mell hugs her partner, Christin Baker, after the House voted for civil unions.

Harris says civil unions would also be an option for heterosexual seniors who do not want to remarry but want a partner to be involved in their life plans.

"This legislation is a fair, moderate center. It does not change the definition of marriage. It provides basic legal rights to our citizens. It's a matter of fairness. It's a matter of respect. It's a matter of equality," Harris says.

Some Republicans say they support the concept but could not back the bill because it would require the state to give same-sex couples pension benefits and may require insurance companies to offer spousal coverage to gay and lesbian couples. "Our cup of debt is full, and we cannot take one more drop of financial strain," says Sen. Dan Duffy, a Lake Barrington Republican.

However, Peoria Democratic Sen. David Koehler, another sponsor of the measure, says Illinois currently offers health care benefits to domestic partners, and people pay a small amount into the pension system to potentially cover a spouse. If they are not married when they retire, they get the money back. "In a

sense, everybody has been paying into that all along."

Pierceson says in addition to the obvious rights civil unions offer, "there are so many small things that married couples take for granted." He points to benefits, such as family gym memberships or cell-phone plans.

He does not expect a multitude of lawsuits to enforce the law because other states have already provided examples on implementing civil unions. However, some religious groups may stop administering certain social services, such as adoption and foster care. Catholic Charities stopped administering foster care in some places that recognize same-sex couples — such as Washington, D.C. — to avoid having to place children with gay or lesbian couples.

County clerks would issue licenses for civil unions, and in most counties, the fee would be about \$30. Illinois would also recognize out-of-state civil unions, same-sex marriages and domestic partnerships as civil unions in this state. Like marriages, a court must dissolve civil unions.

Jamey Dunn

Police, firefighter hires will have to work longer

Police officers and firefighters may soon have to wait longer to retire if they want to receive full benefits.

The General Assembly passed **Senate Bill 3538**, which would lower benefits for new hires and require local governments to consistently fund the pension system. Retirees would have to spend 30 years on the job and work to age 55, instead of the current age 50, to earn full benefits. They could receive partial benefits at 50 if they have worked for 10 years. Pension benefits would be based on a retiree's salary from the last eight years of service. Currently, it is based on the final year, so a large raise near the end of a career can have a substantial impact on benefits. The top salary that benefits could be based on would be \$106,800. Employee contribution levels would not increase.

The measure also creates a ramped-up schedule starting in 2015 that would require municipalities to fund pensions at

90 percent by the end of their 2040 fiscal year.

Chicago Mayor Richard Daley warned that the mandated pension payments would cost the city, which faces its own budget crisis, \$550 million each year after 2015. Waukegan Democratic Sen. Terry Link, the bill's sponsor, and Senate President John Cullerton vowed to make changes to address Chicago's concerns with another bill they say will come up for a vote this month.

Pat Devaney, president of the Associated Firefighters of Illinois, says police and firefighter pensions are underfunded primarily because of the economic downturn and local governments failing to hold up their obligations. However, he says labor groups realized that cuts to benefits would be part of the equation. "That was our goal, to shore up this system and to make sure that these plans would remain solvent. ... We understood that even though they weren't warranted, that bene-

fit reductions were going to take place."

However, he says the reductions in this measure went too far.

Vetoed

Legislators also considered Quinn's vetoes to several bills. They overrode the governor's changes to **House Bill 5154**, which now seals public employee evaluations. Quinn's rewrite would have left open all evaluations except law enforcement personnel — a move he says was made for safety and security reasons.

Lawmakers also rejected the governor's amendatory veto to **HB 5206**, which allows county clerks to electronically clear deceased residents from voting rolls. Quinn's added provision would have created a citizen's initiative process to allow Illinoisans to bring ethics reform legislation before the General Assembly.

Since the legislature was able to vote down Quinn's changes with a three-fifths majority, the original versions of both bills become law.

Jamey Dunn

Innocence project wins federal grant

The Downstate Illinois Innocence Project at the University of Illinois Springfield has received a federal grant of more than \$687,000 to work with cases where DNA testing might clear the accused.

The project, founded in 2001, has provided investigation and research assistance in efforts that helped lead to the exoneration of three wrongfully convicted Illinoisans. The program, which has received more than 400 requests, has identified about 30 cases to further investigate whether DNA testing could lead to exoneration, says Larry Golden, the innocence project's director. "The award will allow the Downstate Illinois Innocence Project to review and evaluate DNA in cases where such testing might be proof positive of innocence."

Two central Illinois cases are among those that the project has identified for further investigation, Golden says.

Jeannette and Michael Slover Sr. and their son, Michael Jr., were convicted in Macon County in 2002 and sentenced to 65 years in prison for the 1996 murder of the son's former wife, Karyn Slover. But the project contends the conviction

occurred despite the "lack of any physical evidence or any kind of coherent theory on how they could have committed this crime."

Thomas McMillen of rural Virden, one of five people convicted in the 1989 murder of Melissa Koontz of Waverly, has claimed innocence. The project has a court order for DNA testing. Golden says he hopes that will occur in January.

The Justice Department's Bloodsworth grant pays for evaluation of cases, DNA laboratory tests, investigation and legal representation in post-conviction DNA testing motions. UIS' project was one of four, and the largest, to receive a Bloodsworth grant this year, Golden says. Specifically, UIS' project will use the money to pay for testing to evaluate cases to determine which should be pursued further; provide legal assistance, including a lawyer who would serve as project coordinator; and buy the time of Bill Clutter, the project's director of investigations.

Students from the law schools at Southern Illinois University and the University of Illinois will work to

narrow down which cases should be pursued further, Golden says.

In 1997, according to the project, Illinois became one of the first states in the country to adopt legislation giving convicted individuals access to DNA testing. A decade later, the state legislature allowed for DNA retesting, recognizing improvements in test methods.

Golden, who has worked pro bono as the project's director since he retired from UIS in 2004, says he estimates that the project has operated annually with \$50,000 in "hard money."

His greatest fear, he says, is that the grant money will dissuade future funders.

The project's work will continue to be necessary, Golden says. "Until society is willing to provide the resources to commit to people who are actually innocent — by the way that's what we're talking about here, people who are actually innocent; we're not talking about errors in the trial and things like that — until this society is willing to make the commitment to help those individuals, it's going to require extraordinary means."

Maureen Foertsch McKinney

LEGISLATIVE CHECKLIST

It is the start of a new year, and that means a number of new laws go into effect, including measures targeting sex offenders, election law changes and new regulations regarding pets.



Monkey ban

HB 4801 Illinois residents can no longer keep monkeys as pets, under a new law sponsored by Democrats Rep. Daniel Burke of Chicago and Sen. Don Harmon of Oak Park.



Pet adoption

HB 5772 Pet stores and animal shelters must provide information — such as the breed, age, medical history and any fees associated with the adoption of dogs and cats — to potential pet owners. Democrats Sen. Jeffrey Schoenberg of Evanston and Rep. Susanna Mendoza of Chicago sponsored the measure.



Sex offenses

HB 6464 Parents and guardians now cannot knowingly leave children under the supervision of a sex offender, under a new law sponsored by Sen. Mike Jacobs, an East Moline Democrat, and Rep. Patrick Verschoore, a Milan Democrat. The measure also requires sex offenders to report whether they live with children.

HB 4583 Minors caught sending lewd photos of other minors via the Internet or cell phones, a practice referred to as “sexting,” will not be required to register as sex offenders. However, they will be subject to arrest and could be sentenced to counseling or community service. Republican Rep. Darlene Senger of Naperville and Democratic Sen. Ira Silverstein of Chicago sponsored the law.



Election law

SB 355 This new law moves Illinois’ primary election date back from the first Tuesday in February to the third Tuesday in March. The measure was sponsored by Sen. Deanna Demuzio, a Carlinville Democrat, and Rep. Elaine Nekritz, a Northbrook Democrat.

HB 5820 Governor and lieutenant governor candidates must be nominated together and run as teams. The law was sponsored by Skokie Democratic Rep. Lou Lang and Chicago Democratic Sen. Kwame Raoul.



Governor’s portrait

HB 5109 Public money cannot be used to commission a portrait for the “hall of governors” in the Statehouse if the subject was impeached and removed from office. A portrait of former Gov. Rod Blagojevich could hang in the hall, but it could not be paid for with state funds. The law was sponsored by Rep. Bill Black, a Republican from Danville, and Sen. Michael Frerichs, a Democrat from Champaign.



Red-light cameras

SB 935 Drivers who stop past the crosswalk at a red light are safe from getting a ticket at traffic signals that are monitored by cameras. The state is also required to study whether cameras at intersections, meant to deter motorists from running red lights, reduce accidents. Senate President John Cullerton and Rep. John D’Amico, a Chicago Democrat, sponsored the new law.



Employee credit checks

HB 4658 Employers cannot check credit histories when deciding whom to hire, promote or fire. The law exempts certain industries and employers, such as banks and insurance companies, and specific positions that might require an employee to handle cash or have access to credit information. The measure was proposed by Sen. Don Harmon, an Oak Park Democrat, and Democratic Rep. Jack Franks of Marengo.

Legislators also considered other measures and introduced several new bills during the veto session.



Medical marijuana

SB 1381 This measure, which has passed in the Senate, would allow residents with chronic or debilitating ill-

nesses to gain access to medical marijuana. Skokie Democratic Rep. Lou Lang, a sponsor of the legislation, says a patient approved by the Illinois Department of Public Health or a person designated as an eligible patient’s primary caregiver could legally possess up to two ounces of dried cannabis and six marijuana plants — only three of which could be mature plants. The bill, which did not receive enough votes to pass when called in the House, has been held for future consideration.



Death penalty

SB 3539 Advocates of repealing the death penalty in Illinois are making a renewed push with this bill. The measure calls for an end to capital punishment and the dissolution of the capital litigation fund, established to help death penalty defendants build their cases. Maywood Democratic Rep. Karen Yarbrough, a sponsor of the bill, says the money would go toward support for homicide victims’ families and police training. Chicago Democratic Sen. Kwame Raoul is the Senate sponsor of the measure. The state has not enforced the death penalty since former Gov. George Ryan called for a moratorium in 2000 after several death row inmates were exonerated.



Gaming

SB 3970 This measure, sponsored by Sen. Terry Link, a Waukegan Democrat, would permit horse racing tracks to have slot machines, as well as allow new casinos in Chicago, the northern Illinois communities of Park City, and a yet-to-be named southern suburb and Rockford and the central Illinois city of Danville.



Smoking and casinos

HB 1846 Casinos in direct competition with gambling facilities in other states that do not have a smoking ban would be allowed to let patrons smoke indoors. The exemption, sponsored by Rep. Daniel Burke, a Chicago Democrat, would be removed if neighboring states institute smoking bans.

HB 1850 Smokers could smoke in special ventilated rooms constructed in casinos, under a bill proposed by Democratic Rep. Andre Thapedi of Chicago.

✓ **Alcoholic energy drinks**

SB 3973 This measure would ban so-called alcoholic energy drinks, which contain caffeine and other stimulants. The Chicago-based Phusion Projects

produces one such beverage, called Four Loko. The company plans to remove the caffeine from its products. Sen. Ira Silverstein, a Chicago Democrat, sponsored the bill.

✓ **Appointees**

HB 5057 The bill would remove individuals appointed to more than 700 government positions whose terms have expired. The Senate would have to

approve any new nominations, and those removed by the bill would be eligible for nomination. Many of the positions that would be affected are unpaid posts, and some are already vacant. However, some include members of the governor's Cabinet. Senate President John Cullerton and House Speaker Michael Madigan sponsored the legislation.

Jamey Dunn

For more news see the *Illinois Issues* website at <http://illinoisissues.uis.edu>

CAMPAIGN FINANCE

Spending limits go into effect

Illinois legislative candidates will face contribution limits and other new campaign finance reform measures this year.

The bulk of **Senate Bill 1446**, which passed during the fall veto session in 2009, went into effect at the beginning of this month. It is the first time in Illinois history that campaign contributions have been limited.

A version of campaign finance reform passed after many ups and downs — including opposition from Gov. Pat Quinn's Illinois Reform Commission while Quinn testified on behalf of it at a committee hearing — in the 2009 spring legislative session. Quinn, with the support of the four legislative leaders, vetoed that measure and worked toward a version that Illinois reform groups would approve.

Individuals are now limited to contributing \$5,000 to any single candidate and \$10,000 to any political party, legislative caucus committee or political action committee. Businesses and unions can give up to \$10,000 per candidate and \$20,000 to any party or committee. Candidates can give up to \$50,000 to another candidate or any one political action committee. They are limited to \$50,000 for committees that participate in primary elections. They can give unlimited cash to political parties and legislative committees for general elections.

Political parties and legislative caucus committees cannot give more than \$125,000 to Senate candidates, \$75,000 to House candidates and \$20,000 to political action committees during primary elections. They are not limited during general elections.

Kent Redfield, director of the Sunshine Project, a nonprofit campaign contribution database connected to the Illinois Campaign for Political Reform, says reporting standards, such as requiring contributions of \$1,000 or more to be posted electronically within a week, go further than limits of addressing connections between contributions and policymaking. "Anytime you put limits in a system, then people try to figure out a way to get around limits."

Redfield added, "I can [now] go to the [State Board of Elections'] website each week and see if any of my local legislators have gotten contributions of \$1,000 or more."

Republicans balked at limiting the spending of parties and legislative leaders during the primary only, pointing out that



parties and leadership often do not back candidates in a substantial way until general election campaigns.

"Is it significant that we have limits? Yes. Does it completely transform Illinois campaign finance in terms of the leaders and the parties? No," Redfield says.

The four legislative leaders and two political parties doled out big money in the most recent battle for control of the General Assembly. More than 65 percent, or \$16.7 million, of the amount raised in the 25 races that the Illinois Campaign for Political Reform characterized as "in play" came from legislative leaders or political parties.

"I think it explains why the leaders were so reluctant to limit their own giving [during recent pushes for campaign finance reform]," says David Morrison, deputy director of the Illinois Campaign for Political Reform.

He adds that rank-and-file legislators have little motivation to change a system where, for the most part, political parties and legislative leaders hold the purse strings because that is what got them elected. "They may have decided to run for election because they care about taxes or jobs or whatever, but the one thing they share is, they know how to circulate petitions, knock on doors and win elections."

Jamey Dunn

BRIEFLY

STIMULUS FUNDING

Floodplain renewal

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provided \$5 million last year to restore floodplains along rivers and creeks in Illinois.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS) received the funding to offer landowners the chance to take their flood-prone cropland out of production and restore it to its natural condition.

After the agency received funding, landowners voluntarily applied for the program. A restoration plan was developed for the chosen areas, and the projects were contracted with outside businesses for their completion, says Jody Christiansen, public affairs specialist for the USDA-NRCS. Projects were scheduled to be complete by December.

Landowners were given an easement payment in exchange for the rights of future development on the land, including crop and timber production and the construction of any buildings. They maintain the right to hunt and use the land for quiet enjoyment, says Ivan Dozier, assistant state conservationist for programs for the USDA-NRCS.

To be eligible for funding, land had to have been used for crop production and have flooded at least once in the past 12 months or twice in the past 10 years.

From more than 300 applicants, 11 sites in nine counties were chosen to receive funding. They included land in Adams, Clark, Fulton, Gallatin, Greene, Jersey, Kendall, Lawrence and Pope

counties. The Kendall County Forest Preserve District owns one of the sites.

The process was very competitive, says Dozier.

Restoring floodplains to their natural condition provides several benefits to communities, including flood prevention, improved water quality, recreational opportunities, aesthetic beauty and improved wildlife habitat, according to the USDA-NRCS.

"From a tax dollar perspective, floodplain restoration can reduce crop disaster payments and save millions of dollars each year. The recurring expense of repairing levees and dredging streams will also be reduced," USDA-NRCS biologist Dave Hiatt said in a news release.

More than half of Illinois' floodplains have been altered or changed through levees, locks, dams or stream channelization over the past century, USDA-NRCS says.

"By taking the areas out of production permanently, you avoid some of the costs of continually coming back in and trying to repair them. Plus, you give the floodwater a place to go," says Dozier.

The biggest part of restoring floodplains is revegetation, which includes planting native trees, plants and grasses. In some cases, small structures or berms are constructed to help the process along. It can take several years to fully restore floodplains, he says.

"This is a pretty good fit to not only get an influx of dollars out to a different segment of the economy, but also to get some long-term conservation and flood prevention benefits out of these areas as well," Dozier says.

Kendall Cramer

Photograph courtesy of the USDA/NRCS



Dave Hiatt, a Natural Resources Conservation Service biologist, at a property being converted from farmland to floodplain

Floodplain rules spark FEMA lawsuit

More than 25 southwestern Illinois entities — including several municipalities and Madison, Monroe and St. Clair counties — have filed suit in federal court in East St. Louis against the Federal Emergency Management Agency over the de-accreditation of a levee system that protects the region from Mississippi River flooding.

The aim of the suit, according to a jointly released written statement, is to invalidate flood insurance maps the agency plans to put into effect in 2011.

According to the news release, in August of 2007, FEMA ruled that the levee system that protects a large area of those three counties could no longer provide security from a 100-year flood, effectively requiring removal of those levees from flood insurance maps.

The decision affects homeowners and businesses in a 174-square-mile area known as the American Bottom, creating

Military academy to get new campus

Lincoln's Challenge Academy in Rantoul has received \$38 million in state funds to construct a new campus for 300 to 500 students.

The youth military academy is located on the former Chanute Air Force base. The program, administered by the Illinois National Guard, places high school dropouts in a military environment for 22 weeks.

Planning and design of the campus is scheduled to begin this winter, with construction to start in 2012.

Through a challenging military regimen, cadets learn self-discipline and educational skills to become productive members of society, says Maj. Brad Leighton, public affairs director for the Illinois National Guard.

Students are given a strict schedule of physical fitness and take standard high school classes. "It's kind of like boot camp or basic training. ... Just meeting these demands builds up their confidence," he says.

Some of the buildings the academy occupies are World War II-era. The "old and drafty facilities" are costly to main-

tain and have had multiple maintenance problems, Leighton says.

"These are just buildings that have seen their time."

Gov. Pat Quinn's Illinois Jobs Now capital construction program will fund the planning and construction of the facility. More than 260 jobs will be created, according to the governor's office.

The new buildings will be designed to be energy efficient and environmentally friendly. The new campus will include facilities for administration, educational, support, physical fitness, dining, parking and other amenities, says Quinn's office.

"The core mission of the Illinois National Guard is to be trained and ready to respond to natural disasters or war," Leighton says. However, "every year [funding for Lincoln's Challenge Academy] finds its way back into the budget because it is a great investment."

It is estimated that the program will cost about \$10 million for the 2011 fiscal year. The federal government will provide an estimated \$7.5 million, and the state will pay \$2.5 million, he says.

Until this fiscal year, 60 percent of funds came from the federal government and 40 percent came from the state. Congress altered funding, and now the federal government pays 75 percent and the state 25 percent.

"In these tough fiscal times, this is a program that the federal government has decided to endorse and kick in more of their share," Leighton says.

Lincoln's Challenge has graduated more than 11,400 students since the program started in 1993. It is the largest single-site program in the country and one of the most successful, he says.

The program decreases the likelihood that at-risk youth will end up on the wrong side of the law or use other social services in the future, Leighton says.

Among the graduates, 49 percent obtain jobs, 34 percent attend college and 12 percent join the military. The other 5 percent do not have immediate plans after graduating.

Leighton says, "The idea is to build up these students' pride, their self-worth, and also to get them some education."

Kendall Cramer

a need for them to purchase new flood insurance, which has been estimated to cost \$50 million a year.

The affected levee systems were designed and built in the 1940s and 1950s by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Since the construction of the levees, the structures have not failed to protect land from Mississippi River flooding. "We are talking this action very reluctantly, but FEMA has left us with little choice but to file this lawsuit to protect the rights of citizens and business of the area behind the levees and to protect the economy of the region," Mark Kern, St. Clair County board chairman, said in the release.

The lawsuit claims the de-accreditation will "impose enormous costs" on businesses and residents, "greatly depress land values in the area," curtail the powers of the local governments suing to "plan for land use and economic development" and "require the local communities to adopt building and zoning codes that will make new building so onerous as to effectively put an end to any further development or

improvement of properties in the American Bottom area."

It also contends that the de-accreditation will "inhibit the local communities' ability to improve flood protection by establishing a regulatory floodway with correspondingly high base flood elevations on the landside of the levees."

The suit contends: "In deciding to de-accredit the levees, FEMA acted arbitrarily, relying on very limited, secret and highly flawed data and analysis, and directing the preparation of flood studies and maps on the basis of expediencies of time and cost rather than scientific and technical evidence as required by governing legislation. The agency further ignored the express commands of the governing statutes and regulations to consult with local elected officials and communities before engaging in activities such as de-accrediting levees that have been repeatedly found acceptable after inspection by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers ... and that have protected the area from high water events well in

excess of the FEMA base flood standard."

FEMA spokesman Brad Carroll in late November said his agency had not yet been served with a complaint. "But once we are, we will respond through the appropriate legal channels. FEMA's top priority is the safety of the communities we serve. A central part of our commitment to protect lives and property is to ensure that people are aware of the natural hazards and risks that exist in their communities. We are constantly encouraging communities to take steps now to protect against those natural risks, including flooding."

He said FEMA will continue to update flood hazard maps to ensure that communities have up-to-date information. The agency will work with the communities to help determine flood risks, he says.

"Our goal is to ensure that all risks are identified, so that individuals living in areas that may flood can take the necessary steps to protect their property before an emergency occurs," Carroll says.

Maureen Foertsch McKinney

Illinois Issues, others take national awards

Illinois Issues won five national journalism awards in the 2010 statehouse reporting contest sponsored by Capitolbeat, the association of state capitol reporters and editors.

Columnist Charles N. Wheeler III won first place in the Commentary/Column/Analysis category for magazines for his Ends & Means columns. Wheeler also won a third place award in the In-Depth category for magazines for his examination of the state's pension problem that appeared in the February issue.

Statehouse Bureau Chief Jamey Dunn won third place in the Online Beat Reporting category for her reports on the *Illinois Issues* Blog and third place in the Magazine-Single Report category for her article about the state's backlog of unpaid bills, which appeared in the March issue.

Executive Editor Dana Heupel won a second place award in the Commentary/Column/Analysis category for magazines for his Editor's Note columns.

Amanda Vinicky, Statehouse reporter for WUIS and Illinois Public Radio, won third place in the Radio-Beat Reporting category. WUIS is a sister unit of *Illinois Issues* in the Center for State Policy and Leadership at the University of Illinois Springfield.

Other Illinois winners include:

- John O'Connor of the Springfield bureau of the Associated Press, first place in the Large Newspaper/Wire – In-Depth category for his reports on an early prison release program under the Illinois Department of Corrections. O'Connor also won a second place award in the Large Newspaper/Wire – Single Report category for a story

about racial disparities in school discipline.

- Bernard Schoenburg of the Springfield *State Journal-Register*, first place in the Commentary/Column/Analysis category for small newspapers.

- Kevin Lee of Illinois Statehouse News and Suzanne McBride of *ChicagoTalks* both received first place awards in the Online – In-Depth category for articles about Illinois General Assembly scholarships.

- Tim Novak, Art Golab, Chris Fusco and Dave McKinney of the *Chicago Sun-Times* won third place in the Large Newspaper/Wire – In-Depth category for an examination of public pensions in Chicago, Cook County and state government.

The awards were announced November 13 during Capitolbeat's annual conference in Phoenix.

Midwifery clinic to open in Chicago

The growing practice of women using midwives to help them with childbirth and other health needs is gaining another location in Chicago, and midwifery will be able to expand further under a statewide demonstration program ready to begin early this year.

The University of Illinois Chicago's College of Nursing plans to open a new midwifery clinic on the near northwest side of the city this month. The college received a \$1.9 million federal grant to provide care to medically underserved women and women who are physically challenged.

"We have narrowed the choices for the clinic based on several criteria, including being close to transportation and having easy access, since one of the populations we intend to serve is women with disabilities," says Judith Storfjell, executive director of UIC's College of Nursing and associate dean for academic practice.

Many of the 240,000 residents in the communities of Logan Square, West Town and Humboldt Park — the area that will be served — are young, low-income and culturally and ethnically diverse, she says. Many do not speak English.

Statistics from the area, which is federally designated as medically underserved and state-designated as a health professional shortage area, show that infant mortality and premature birth rates are high, while reproductive health care screening rates are low.

In 2008, legislators passed the Alternative Health Care Delivery Act, which expanded Illinois public health demonstration programs to include freestanding birth centers. The public commented on the program directives last fall, and the legislature's Joint Committee on Administrative Rules is reviewing the changes. If approved, the rules will go to Gov. Pat Quinn for final approval.

Freestanding birth centers practice under the philosophy that pregnancy and childbirth are natural processes that should be part of "wellness," rather than needing acute care. Implementa-

tion of the law provides for 10 birthing centers, with no more than 10 beds each, in underserved areas statewide: four for Chicago and the collar counties; three for municipalities with populations of less than 50,000; and three in rural areas. The birthing centers operate under the wing of a licensed hospital or a federally qualified health center.

"We plan to submit a Certificate of Need [to the state] to get one of the freestanding birthing centers at Saint Elizabeth's, which is now an outpatient facility," says Kathryn Christiansen, director of clinical practice at UIC's Institute for Health Care Innovation. That, she says, would give the midwife program more opportunity to serve the community.

Aviva Women's Health and Midwifery Care program, associated with Saints Mary and Elizabeth Medical Center in Chicago, will administer the UIC clinic project. It will be managed by nurses, and UIC nursing faculty will provide the care.

At two other community clinics where UIC provides care — the Infant Welfare Society and Chicago Public Health Department West Town — Aviva midwives attended the vaginal deliveries of 150 women and provided prenatal health care to more than 250 women during more than 3,000 outpatient visits. Storfjell says the nursing college expects in five years to be serving 1,300 patients in 7,000 visits at the new clinic.

In addition to prenatal care and childbirth assistance, the Aviva center will also provide a range of women's health services: lactation consultation, pre-pregnancy consultation, gynecological exams, screening and follow-up, birth control counseling and prescriptions, menopausal counseling and well-woman care, including health education.

The clinic will be funded through a five-year grant from the Health Resources Service Administration, part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Beverley Scobell

Bookshelf **THE THIRD CITY**

The two Richard Daleys — J. and M., father and son — have guided the fortunes and misfortunes of the state's largest and the nation's third-largest city for most of the past six decades. Larry Bennett, professor of political science at DePaul University, takes a close look at the city's evolution from frontier town to industrial giant to city in decline to contemporary "Chicago-in-the-making," which he says city leaders believe is "a prototype of successful urban reinvention."

The Third City (University of Chicago Press, 2010) is Bennett's term for the city that is emerging from its hard-earned image: "[A] metropolis carved into ethnically defined neighborhood enclaves, its population craving iron-willed political leadership, the game of politics overshadowing the ends of politics."

He goes on to define it: "This third city succeeds the first city, Chicago the sprawling industrial center, whose historical arc ran from the Civil War up to the Great Depression, as well as the second city ... the Rust Belt exemplar of the period from approximately 1950 to 1990."

The third city, he says, is testing new approaches to neighborhood revitalization and the reform of public institutions. "Bureaucratic transformation — and more fundamentally, the retooling of government services to reach new constituencies and support an evolving mix of business enterprises — is a hallmark of Richard M. Daley governance."

Also a mark of this mayor is his dedication to environmental amenities. The current city vision, the 2003 Chicago Central Area Plan (Bennett discusses all planning bodies from the Burnham Plan of 1909 to today) proposes that Chicago is becoming a "model of sustainability" and a pioneer in "green technologies."

Bennett says the expansions of O'Hare International Airport and the downtown McCormick Place convention complex have enhanced the geographic importance of Chicago as a meeting place. The development of Navy Pier and the creation of Millennium Park, along with the reconfiguring of



the museum/Soldier Field complex, all boost the fortunes of downtown businesses by bringing in visitors — more than 45 million annually.

The newest incarnation of Chicago is also marked by gentrification. Spurred on by monumental changes to the public school system and public housing, along with numerous small-scale infrastructure and beautification improvements, people have moved into areas with "reimagined local neighborhood identities," adding to the momentum of the ongoing "industrial to commercial/residential transformation of the city's Near West and Near South sides." The Near North Side also experienced "intensi-

fied" residential and commercial development. The 1990s, Bennett notes, were the city of Chicago's first decade of population increase since the 1940s.

"An array of attributes carried over from the First and Second Cities, coupled with the development of new business niches and exploitable pools of skilled human capital, from the viewpoint of global cities formation have produced the Third City."

Bennett contends that to understand contemporary Chicago is to "consider what metropolitan life across North America may well look like in the coming decades."

Beverley Scobell

WORKSHOP



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Senate's No. 2 man

Illinois benefits from Dick Durbin's high-profile role

by Daniel C. Vock

Tucked into the transportation legislation coming from the U.S. House last spring was a formula change that would have reduced Illinois' highway funding by \$119 million. The bill's author, who had lined up the support of both the House speaker and the Senate majority leader, wanted to tinker with the six-year-old formula for handing out road money. Once, the two relatively small pools of money at stake were doled out competitively. But now they had become, essentially, a way to deliver ear-

marked money to favored states. All told, 22 states got nothing from the two programs. More than half of the funds went to just six states. Illinois was one of the chief beneficiaries. Only California had more money at stake.

Illinois ended up with such a large share of the money largely because the 2005 highway bill that contained the funding formula was passed when an Illinoisan, Republican Dennis Hastert, was speaker of the House. But by last spring, Hastert had retired, Democrats

controlled the chamber and the highway bill was set to expire. U.S. Rep. Jim Oberstar, a Minnesota Democrat, thought it was time to change the funding formula. He may have succeeded, too, without the intervention of Illinois' senior senator, Dick Durbin.

Durbin orchestrated a defense from within the Senate, where he and his colleagues effectively turned back repeated attempts to retool the road funding. He was one of 16 senators who sent a letter to Oberstar protesting the change. Durbin argued that the change would penalize Illinois for spending money it already had been promised. He said the reductions would hurt the local economy. And he noted that Illinois already receives less money for highways than its residents pay in federal gasoline taxes.

The months-long standoff between Oberstar and Durbin could be a lesson in the *realpolitik* that governs Capitol Hill negotiations. Both protagonists rallied powerful allies to their side. Both occupied strategic posts that gave them plenty of chances to use procedural tricks to get their way (Oberstar, however, went on to lose his House seat in November). Each crafted a sensible, compelling narrative to justify a stance that just happened to benefit his home state. Perhaps most fittingly, the impasse ended when the opponents agreed to simply spend more money on the program, ensuring that no state lost money.



U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin



U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin in June called on President Barack Obama to appoint a federal coordinated response commander to prevent Asian carp from entering Lake Michigan after the invasive species was discovered in an Illinois waterway.

But it is also a lesson in how Durbin, better known to Illinoisans for his frequent appearances on television and at local ribbon cuttings, plays the ultimate insiders' game in the hallways and hide-aways of the Capitol. It is a crucial part of Durbin's role as an advocate for the agendas of both the Democratic Party and the state of Illinois.

"People in Illinois need to really realize how central a role Durbin plays in the institutional politics [of the Senate]. He determines what gets to the floor, what doesn't get to the floor and how it gets to the floor," says Nancy Beck Young, a University of Houston historian who lived in Illinois for a decade.

Durbin, who lives in Springfield and returns to Illinois most weekends, says his prominent role in Congress benefits his constituents back home. "Illinois," Durbin promises, "will always be at the table for any discussion of legislation involving the leadership."

Since coming to Congress a quarter century ago, Durbin has steadily

advanced through the ranks of first the House and now the Senate. He now holds the title of assistant majority leader, also called the majority whip, which is the second-highest position in the upper chamber. Publicly, he tows the Democratic Party line in floor speeches and Sunday morning talk shows, which is not surprising because he helps craft that party line. *Time* magazine rated Durbin one of the top U.S. senators several years ago, specifically citing his debate skills.

Still, in political circles, Durbin is known as much for his ability to listen as to talk. He knows the inner workings of the Senate and the concerns of its members. He regularly partners with Republicans on lower-visibility issues, such as food safety and natural disaster recovery. Durbin is the ringleader of the Illinois congressional delegation and regularly promotes consensus among the group.

Within the Senate Democratic caucus, Durbin has been a top member of the leadership team since 2004 and has never drawn a challenger for that partisan

post. There was even plenty of chatter — premature, as it turned out — that Durbin would launch a bid to lead the caucus if its current head, Harry Reid of Nevada, had lost his re-election bid in November. Reid held onto his seat, avoiding an intraparty fight to succeed him, but the Washington rumor mill continued to swirl about Durbin's role in the caucus. The speculation increased as Reid shifted responsibilities among his top lieutenants following the elections.

Durbin can be counted on as a reliable liberal vote, whether the issue is judicial nominees or universal health care. *National Journal* rated him as the ninth-most liberal member of the U.S. Senate this year; in 2006, Durbin was rated the most liberal.

Durbin's political skills will be tested in the upcoming Congress. His Democratic Party is in disarray after November's elections, while Republicans have vigorously fought most Democratic bills, even measures sweetened with GOP ideas. That makes Durbin's job of



U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin speaks with President Barack Obama. At left is Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and in the center is U.S. Sen. Byron Dorgan, a Democrat of North Dakota.

keeping his caucus together and pushing through crucial legislation increasingly difficult, a lesson he learned even before the new members of Congress were sworn in. "As the whip, it has been my sad duty to count to 60, and I have missed that number many times," he told the *New York Times* at the beginning of the November lame duck session. "This is going to require bipartisan effort. Is it frustrating? Yes. But that's the reality we have to deal with in the Congress."

Julian Zelizer, a Princeton University professor and an expert on Congress, says Republican unity also makes Durbin's job harder. "It's not just a resurgent Republican Party; it's a very disciplined Republican Party," Zelizer says. "Sen. [Jon] Kyl [Durbin's GOP counterpart] and his team have no problem keeping every Republican on the same page. There are very few moments when Republicans defect."

Durbin and the Democrats got a taste of the GOP discipline during the lame duck session in late November and

December. Durbin had his hands full. He helped push a bipartisan measure through the Senate on food safety, weighed in on potential budget cuts as a member of a deficit-reduction panel, promoted citizenship for undocumented students, attended a White House summit on the expiring Bush tax cuts and pressed for the Senate to ratify a nuclear arms reduction treaty with Russia. (It was during this time that Durbin was scheduled to talk to *Illinois Issues* for this article but did not because of time constraints.)

Nearly all of that work was put in jeopardy when the entire Senate Republican caucus, including newly sworn-in Mark Kirk of Illinois, threatened to filibuster anything that came to the floor before the tax cuts and budget legislation. Shortly before that episode, Durbin fumed at the GOP delaying tactics on a *Meet the Press* appearance with Kyl, who wanted to put off discussions of the nuclear nonproliferation treaty. "People across America who subscribe to cable ask for refunds when they turn on C-SPAN and see the

Senate sit there day after day doing nothing, lurching from filibuster to filibuster," Durbin said. "Come on. Let's be reasonable. Let's be constructive. Let's be bipartisan. We can get these things done. Let's roll up our sleeves and do it."

Running the U.S. Senate is no easy task. The rules of the chamber give individual senators extraordinary power. Senators can stop legislation or nominations dead in their tracks with "holds" that can remain secret to the public. And with 100 members serving on 16 standing committees, it is easy for one or two holdouts to block bills from moving. But by far the biggest obstacle to passing legislation is the filibuster, the stalling tactic that can grind Senate business to a halt on any measure that has fewer than 60 senators behind it. In essence, the filibuster — and senators' increased willingness to use it in recent years — means that even the most mundane matter must garner a supermajority to advance.

As the whip, Durbin is the chief nose counter for the Democratic caucus. It is

his job not just to keep tabs on how many senators support a given bill but also to alert Reid and other members of leadership of potential problems that other members are raising. Durbin is part of Reid's leadership strategy meetings, which also include U.S. Sen. Charles Schumer of New York, Durbin's roommate who holds the No. 3 spot in the caucus.

One of Durbin's most crucial tasks is helping Reid line up bills before they get to the Senate floor. Time on the Senate floor is a precious commodity — it takes 15 minutes on a good day just to hold a vote, all done, of course, by voice — so the majority party must carefully orchestrate which proposals make it there, along with which rules apply. A minor hiccup on a controversial bill could sink its chances, especially if opponents get a chance to amend the proposal with unfriendly changes. Durbin is the one most often responsible for making sure that all of the problems with bills are worked out in committee before they head to the full chamber.

He told *Roll Call*, "When you're down to 53 [senators], the margins are very difficult and, of course, we're going to be putting together a whip's organization, reaching out to our colleagues, and making sure when votes come around, we've got the votes we need."

Young from the University of Houston explains, "He is in a king-making seat by determining what is ready for the floor and what is not." Getting a bill out of committee is a significant feat in Congress, but it is no guarantee that the legislation will make it to the floor. Determining what gets a final vote is a question, not about whether something is good policy, but whether it is politically viable, she says. Durbin's role is to assess whether a bill can pass and whether putting the issue front and center is politically wise.

In that sense, the leadership combines control over legislative tactics and political strategy. Recently, Reid, in particular, has come under fire for his choices on the agenda. He controversially put immigration ahead of cap-and-trade legislation to limit carbon dioxide pollution. He also scheduled votes shortly ahead of the elections on bills that would let gays serve openly in the military and allow

"People in Illinois need to really realize how central a role Durbin plays in the institutional politics [of the Senate]. He determines what gets to the floor, what doesn't get to the floor and how it gets to the floor."

***Historian
Nancy Beck Young***

students in the country illegally to become citizens. Critics said the Senate should have focused instead on efforts to create jobs. Partly in response to that criticism, Reid is handing control over much of his communications shop to Schumer, who helped Senate Democrats increase their numbers in 2006 and 2008.

Heading into the 2012 presidential campaign, the Democrats who run the Senate will determine how their party is viewed nationally, Young says. "Durbin, Reid and Schumer have an important role to play. They have to figure out how to be Democrats and also how to get things done."

Throughout his career, Durbin has moved up the political ladder. He came to the U.S. House in 1982, after working as a lawyer for the Illinois Senate and then Lt. Gov. Paul Simon. He ran unsuccessfully for lieutenant governor and state senator before winning the House seat.

In the House, Durbin worked his way into a position as a member of the "college of cardinals" as chairman of the Appropriation Committee's agriculture subcommittee. Since all spending bills in Congress must start with the House, the subcommittee chairs wield significant power in shaping the federal budget.

He replaced Simon, his mentor, in the Senate after the 1996 election. Durbin quickly hopped on the leadership track, taking on the No. 3 spot in the Democratic caucus two years later under then-leader Tom Daschle. When Daschle lost his spot as the chamber's top Democrat in the 2004 elections, Durbin moved up, as



In May, U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin spoke to the National Coordinated Effort of Hellenes at its annual Cyprus and Hellenic Leadership Conference.

second-in-command to Reid. Two years later, Democrats took control of Congress, which put Durbin in the No. 2 spot in the Senate. He also benefitted from working closely with the junior Illinois senator, Barack Obama, and became one of the first people to publicly encourage Obama to run for president.

Joe Shoemaker, a Durbin spokesman, cites several reasons for Durbin's influence. First, he says, is that members of the House and Senate trust Durbin to hear them out, even when he disagrees with their positions. Durbin also benefits from his good relationships with Reid and Obama. His colleagues know they can count on him to pass along their concerns in leadership meetings, Shoemaker says. Finally, other members depend on Durbin's legislative know-how. They "know that Sen. Durbin was a former parliamentarian for the Illinois Senate," Shoemaker notes. "He knows the rules and procedures very well, so other senators often come to him for tactical advice on moving their legislation."

Young offers a different take. "He's a pragmatist," she says. "He understands how to count votes, and he understands the complex mechanizations of the Democratic Party. You can't be an ideologue and be successful in his role." Still, Durbin's pragmatism will be put to the test in the coming Congress. To succeed, he will not only have to put aside his own ideology; he will have to persuade several Republican senators to do the same. □
Daniel C. Vock is a reporter for Stateline.org in Washington, D.C.



The telecommute

A growing number of Illinoisans make their offices at home

by Marcia Frellick

Wayne Turnmel wakes up each weekday morning at 6 in his home in Glen Ellyn, a western suburb of Chicago, brews a pot of coffee and checks his work e-mail on his BlackBerry. He makes a few calls, heads to the gym and is back by 8:45. That leaves him 15 minutes to hit the shower and get to work.

That's not such a problem when your "commute" takes less than a minute. Turnmel owns Greatwebmeetings.com, which teaches managers how to work with their remote teams and teaches

workers to create and assess their team communication. He is also the "connected manager" blogger for BNET, the CBS interactive business network.

Turnmel used to work in a traditional office but now is among the small but growing number of telecommuters in Illinois who work from home.

About 232,000 Illinois residents, or 3.9 percent of workers 16 or older in the state, said they worked from home in 2009, up from 3.7 percent in 2004, according to the American Community Survey (ACS),

which is an annual survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Virtually the same percentage of women (4 percent) and men (3.9 percent) worked from home in Illinois in 2009, according to the data. Almost half (47 percent) were in management, professional and related occupations, followed by sales and office occupations (27.1 percent) and service occupations (16.3 percent). Forty-one percent of Illinois telecommuters are between the ages of 25 to 44, and 28 percent are 45 to 54.

The numbers reflect national trends. The percentage of workers 16 and older in the United States who said they worked from home in 2009 was 4.3 percent, up from 3.8 percent in 2004.

But estimates vary based on how “telecommuting” is defined and because sometimes the arrangements are set informally and not part of written policy. Variables include how much time spent working from home constitutes telecommuting or whether working from locations other than home are included in the definition. The ACS question asked the location where the person worked most often during the reference week.

A national survey called “Telework Trendlines 2009” shows that while numbers are rising rapidly for those who telecommute one day per month, the numbers who do it almost every day are dropping. The study was commissioned by WorldatWork with data collected by The Dieringer Research Group from 1,002 U.S. adults in late 2008.

The number of Americans who work from home at least one day per month rose to 33.7 million in 2008 from 28.7 million in 2006, a 17 percent increase. The numbers showed a 43 percent increase from 2003.

However, the number of telecommuters who work remotely “almost every day” dropped from 51 percent in 2006 to 40 percent in 2008, the study showed.

Survey authors said the increase in occasional telecommuting was probably due to a combination of factors, including the proliferation of high-speed and wireless Internet access and hand-held technologies; rising fuel and commuting costs; and increased emphasis by employers on offering work-life balance.

Mahmassani Hani says that’s the picture he’s seeing as director of Northwestern University’s Transportation Center. He sees the rise in numbers of people working from home not so much a result of economic shifts, such as the recession or soaring fuel costs, but a result of technological advancements that make such arrangements possible.

“With technology, with broadband, we have all become more mobile,” Hani says. “But that doesn’t mean [telecommuters] are not ever going into an office.”

He says employers are offering the option as an amenity to hire and keep

good workers. “Ultimately, they end up being more productive that way,” Hani says. “People can be more productive overall when they have the flexibility to work from home and insulate themselves from distractions and disruptions.”

Also contributing to the rise in telecommuting or “telework,” Hani says, are the increasing numbers of companies bitten by the recession that may not be ready to hire permanent employees with benefits but are temporarily contracting out work to people who work remotely.

But he sees no wave of people moving to work completely from home. In fact, people may be switching from total telecommuting to partial telecommuting because they like to feel connected and like the social aspects of a communal office, Hani says. “When they don’t have that, they miss it,” he says.

Turmel says making that personal connection remotely has brought a whole new challenge to boss-employee relationships.

“Telecommuting is a huge issue,” he says. “Not enough companies are prepared, and they’re certainly not preparing their managers. Not only are many managers working at home for the first time, but the way you’re asked to manage is completely different. It’s not like you can poke your head over the cubicle like a meerkat and see how people are doing.”

Micromanaging doesn’t work, Turmel says. “You just can’t do it — especially if you have a whole team of remote people. You can’t know what’s going on every minute of the day. You need to trust your people more. For people who aren’t used to delegating and aren’t comfortable delegating, you have to give people really good direction up front and then measure the results. Everything that happens in between happens on faith.”

Managers also have to get comfortable with a new array of technology, he says.

“If e-mail is the extent of technology they’re comfortable with, they’re going to get in trouble eventually. You have to learn to use all the tools at your disposal — Web presentation tools, virtual meeting tools like Webex, etc. Do you know how to use file sharing and how to set up wikis (Web pages edited collaboratively) and blogs for your teams? Are you using instant messaging? Phone and e-mail may

be enough for the manager and employee to communicate, but it’s not enough for the employees and their peers to communicate. It’s hard to build teams if the team members can’t build relationships among each other.”

A mistake managers make is that they become the lifeline for all the employees, Turmel says, and therefore, also the bottleneck.

Illinois is not a hotbed of telecommuting, Hani says, compared with the Bay Area in California, for instance, which has an economy that is heavier on data-driven, high-tech industry.

But some large Illinois companies see a benefit in telecommuting.

State Farm Insurance, headquartered in Bloomington, is one company that has a formal policy on telecommuting, says Susan Movic, an analyst in the human relations department at State Farm. Only 23 of its 16,800 employees statewide telecommute full time, she says, but many more have flexible work arrangements such as four extended days with a three-day weekend, or they work from home occasionally but maintain office space.

“As advances are made in technology, more jobs may be conducive to a telecommuter arrangement,” Movic says. “Similar to other companies, State Farm is just beginning to explore all of the possibilities around the advancement of technology.”

“Telecommuting itself is a win-win because it promotes employee engagement, but it also meets business needs,” Movic says underwriters and claims representatives are among the jobs at State Farm that are well-suited to telecommuting. She adds that the company is studying how telecommuting affects the environment and need for office space.

Hani says it’s not always the case that telecommuting results in reduced fuel costs. In fact, he says, it could result in more.

Here’s the reason: Freeing up more time can lead to having more projects, which in turn may require new travel. “Telecommuting allows us to do more rather than the same thing with less travel,” Hani says. “Because you’re able to do some meetings online, you do those but end up taking on more work because you do it remotely. With these activities, you still need face-to-face. That whole connection has been far from obvious.”

Mark Pleshar of Round Lake, program and creative director for MessageMakers, a multimedia communications company based in Lansing, Mich., says another misconception of telecommuting is that people who work from home are not as efficient as someone working in an office.

Though he doesn't often work typical office hours, Pleshar says, he is able to work with his business contacts in different time zones at times that may be more convenient for them. But being out of sight can put you out of mind in the corporate culture, and that takes some getting used to, he says. He also goes to Lansing once a month for in-person meetings.

Pleshar says telecommuting has forced him to learn a new work dynamic and to communicate mostly by texting and Instant Messenger. It also allows him to spend more time with his wife and his children, ages 4 and 6.

"I'm forever spoiled, and if there comes a time for me to make a shift, it will be very difficult for me to work in an office again," Pleshar says.

Treating employees differently is a danger of telecommuting, and it's another

thing managers need to be careful of, Turmel says. Take sick days, for instance.

When someone in an office is sick, he or she goes home, and the rest of the staff knows that the person is to be left alone, and the work covered in another way.

But when a person who works from home is sick, co-workers may think they can call on that person to check an e-mail or participate in a conference call, Turmel says. Policies must be spelled out and rigidly adhered to for the telecommuter, as well as the office employees, Turmel says.

Turmel says telecommuting arrangements will be more common in years to come.

"It's inevitable," he says. "By most estimates, 70 to 80 percent of managers have [someone who reports to them] who doesn't work where they do, whether that person is truly telecommuting or working in a different place. And if you look at how much work is being done by remote and virtual project teams, there will be more and more people working out of their homes."

The national WorlDatWork survey

showed that 38 percent of respondents who reported they were not telecommuting said they had job-related tasks they thought they could do from home. Sixty-one percent said they did not have job tasks that could be performed remotely.

When the 38 percent were asked how interested they were in potentially doing some or all of the tasks they could do remotely from home if their employer agreed, 50 percent said they were very or somewhat interested.

Hani says he sees some anecdotal evidence that more opportunities are coming for telecommuting in Illinois.

"Jobs that were being outsourced to other countries have come back to the U.S. — things like call centers and customer services. Illinois is one of the places where jobs are coming back. Those jobs often include an element of working from home. Some of the negatives of not having closer connections in customer service have really hurt. So we are seeing returns of those jobs to the Midwest, where the labor force is willing and not demanding high wages." □

Marcia Frellick is a Chicago-based freelance writer.



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Illinois' newest senator is a multitasker and a policy wonk

by Jamey Dunn

Mark Kirk was characterized in many different ways as he made the jump from U.S. representative to his new position as U.S. senator.

His opponent for the Senate seat, Illinois Treasurer Alexi Giannoulias, painted Kirk as a man who spun tall tales about his past, who changed his mind about legislation when he returned to Washington, D.C., and who is a friend to Wall Street and big business.

Those who have worked with him over the years say he is smart, works exceptionally hard, fights for causes he cares about and feels a deep connection to the military because of his years of service. They call him an apt multitasker and a "policy wonk."

Kirk calls himself "a fiscal conservative, a social moderate and a national security hawk."

There are narratives to support all those characterizations. As Kirk enters a strongly partisan Senate landscape, with many other members of his freshman class having a decidedly more conservative bent than his own record, Illinois voters who are familiar with Rep. Kirk are watching to see what kind of legislator Sen. Kirk will be.

Kirk began his political career as a legislative assistant in the office of former U.S. Rep. John Porter after earning a master's degree at the London School of Economics.

Porter says Kirk was intelligent, hard-working and stood out in a group that he describes as the "best and the brightest." Kirk worked his way up to become Porter's chief of staff. While working "full time and a half," as Porter describes it, Kirk also earned his law degree from

Georgetown University Law Center in Washington, D.C., studying at night.

William Cadigan, who worked for Porter when Kirk was chief of staff, says Kirk's schedule made him miss out on most of the staff softball team's winning season, though Kirk did make it to the game where they clinched their title.

He adds that Kirk encouraged a "collegial" attitude in the office, and unlike many congressional chiefs of staff, was not a strict gatekeeper when it came to access to his boss. "Chiefs of staffs, if they want to, can dominate the environment in a congressional office," Cadigan says. "Mark was always one to let someone who had a good idea to, one, take credit; and two, take it to John Porter."

During the U.S. Senate race, voters were hit by an onslaught of negative ads from both sides. Kirk accused former

banker Giannoulis of making loans to mobsters, while Giannoulis called Kirk's integrity into question when reports surfaced that he had overstated aspects of his military record, including a claim that he won a prestigious award when it actually went to his team.

Inaccuracies in accounts of his military service led reporters to look into other aspects of Kirk's past, such as an often-told story from his teenage years about being rescued by the Coast Guard after his sailboat capsized in Lake Michigan. The *Chicago Tribune* questioned Kirk's claims that the rescue happened after sunset and that his body temperature had reached 82 degrees. However, the larger aspects of his account proved true.

"This is one of the most important events in my life. I was not as well-focused before this event but very well-focused after, aware of your own mortality. ... Thirty-four years ago, as a 16-year-old, this is the way I remember it," Kirk told the *Tribune*.

When asked after the election whether he would like to clarify some of the things that — by his own account — he "misremembered," Kirk reiterates a statement he made often on the campaign trail. "I've spent 20 years of my life in the [Navy] reserve service. ... I made mistakes. I owned them. I apologized for them, and I corrected them."

Kirk — who, according to the *Washington Post*, has received at least six military awards and decorations — adds, "I would give my life up for this country."

Porter chalks up Kirk's inaccurate recollections about his experience in the Navy as "sloppiness" and human error, as opposed to an effort to inflate his resume. "That's an unforced error. He already had the best record in the Congress," Porter says.

"I think that if it had just been on policy — Mark — his margin of victory would have been much, much bigger. ... It's politics, and Mark certainly sought the position knowing that it would be a rigorous campaign," Cadigan says.

Kent Redfield, an emeritus professor of political science at the University of Illinois Springfield, says the discrepancies caused concern among voters. "I think the question of embellishing the narrative and embellishing the resume

are things that give you pause in terms of kind of how comfortable he is and sure he is of his identity."

Throughout the campaign, Kirk called for an end to legislative earmarks — spending authority inserted into a bill, often at a lawmaker's request, that goes to a specific state or project. Shortly before he took office, his Republican colleagues took a vow not to support any earmarked funds.

As a U.S. representative, Kirk supported spending on Illinois projects, including the merger of a veterans hospital and Navy medical facility, which were funded with earmarks. However, he says lawmakers should have to persuade the president's administration to include a project in the budget instead of pushing it through in legislation that is often unrelated or using funds as a bargaining chip for votes on a bill.

Al Pate, director of the North Chicago Veterans Affairs Medical Hospital when it was targeted for closure, paints the picture of a man who saw a simple solution to a problem and then pushed on doggedly until it became a reality. When the hospital was going to be closed, Kirk proposed a merger with the nearby Naval Hospital Great Lakes. "No one had ever done what Mark Kirk had proposed. ... I think it's a model for the future. It's a great model," Pate says.

Pate says the renovations required for the merger were funded in part with federal money earmarked for the project. He adds that it was an uphill climb for Kirk to find backing in Congress and get the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs on board with a first-of-its-kind plan.

"It looked a lot to me like a one-man crusade," Pate says. "He didn't give up. ... He was very serious. ... This went beyond just providing service to his constituents. This ran deeper than that."

Pate says Kirk's Navy service lent him credibility and insight when dealing with the military administration. He says the combined medical facility will bring benefits that the separate units could not, such as better technology and the opportunity for the Army and Navy to share doctors and expensive medical equipment.

"He's never taken full credit for what I know had to have been not an easy call for him," says Pate. "If Mark Kirk hadn't

been in the House from the 10th [District], it's probably a safe bet to say that never would have happened."

Although Kirk fought to save the veterans hospital, he has called for cuts in defense funding as part of an overall plan to reduce spending and balance the federal budget. He describes the spending in the federal stimulus plan as a "sugar high" from which the country is now crashing as the money begins to run out.

Kirk supports the creation of a bipartisan group similar to the Private Sector Survey on Cost Control, also known as the Grace Commission, which operated under President Ronald Reagan. Kirk says such a committee geared toward current spending reductions should have the authority to present recommendations to Congress for an up-or-down vote.

Some of Kirk's biggest campaign contributors include investment firms such as New York-based Elliot Management, Chicago-based Madison Dearborn Partners and JP Morgan Chase & Co., but Kirk says such contributions will not hinder his ability to consider investment sector reform, which may come up for consideration in the Senate. Of the Wall Street reform bill that President Barack Obama signed in July, Kirk says, "We hit the wrong institution." In the wake of the housing crisis, he says, the government should have cracked down harder on mortgage lenders Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. Kirk believes the government has had a hand in slowing economic growth with "too much spending, too much debt and too much regulation."

He adds: "I support capitalism. And I think that the free markets made this country the largest economy on Earth."

Porter says Kirk is entering the U.S. Senate when Republicans are demanding party loyalty through increasingly extreme means. "The thing that's most different from when I served is that the party discipline is just unbelievable."

He says threats from party leaders to strip members of leadership positions, to juggle their committee assignments or even to support primary challengers have made crossing the aisle on a vote more of a high-pressure situation than it was during his tenure in Congress. "I was never ever threatened by the party," Porter says.



Redfield agrees that the partisanship may be a challenge for a “policy-focused workhorse” such as Kirk. He says Kirk moved to the right before the recent election in an effort to court the Republican base, but “by any stretch of the imagination, he is not a ‘movement conservative.’”

Redfield adds that Kirk, as a moderate, may be able to lay low and avoid a lot of the party pressure because plenty of other members will be ready to block Democratic legislation. “They’re either going to have an agreement or he’s going to have a bunch of other people that are willing to filibuster, so he doesn’t have to take the tough votes.”

During the campaign, Kirk changed his position on a climate bill that was geared toward reducing carbon emissions. Although he supported the cap-and-trade legislation in the U.S. House, Kirk says he cannot back it now that he represents the entire state, including coal mining

and manufacturing interests, which it would hit hard. Kirk says lawmakers must use the incentive of “carrots” to encourage businesses to cut carbon emissions voluntarily instead of the “stick” of making them pay for the carbon they release.

He adds that he tries to find a balance between supporting what is most popular among Illinois voters and backing what he believes to be the best policy. “Almost always, I vote with my heart,” Kirk says.

A recent Paul Simon Public Policy Institute poll found that more than 70 percent of Illinoisans somewhat or strongly favor repeal of the “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy on gays and lesbians serving in the military. When asked if the poll results might influence his vote on repeal, Kirk, who supports civil unions for same-sex couples, says he is more concerned about making the choice that is best for the military. He voted against a repeal in the House because he says lawmakers

“jumped the gun” by taking the vote before the Pentagon released its report on the issue. (The report had not been released when Kirk was interviewed for this article.) When asked if it had the potential to change his vote, he said he would “certainly read every word of the report” and “take it into consideration.”

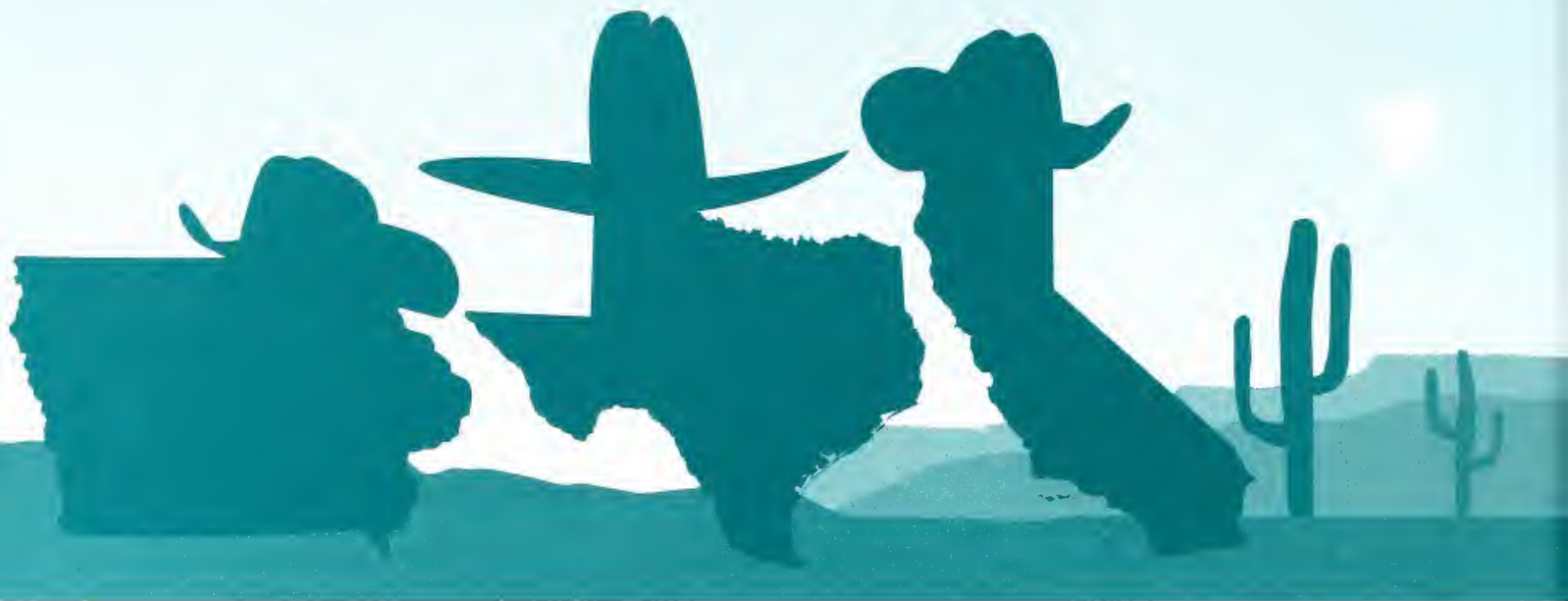
Redfield says those trying to pin down what kind of U.S. senator Kirk may become will likely watch his decision on “don’t ask, don’t tell” closely. “How he votes on that will give you some sense of maybe how things are going to go for the next six years.”

Redfield adds that Kirk could find a productive niche focusing on foreign policy and defense issues. And unlike many U.S. senators, Kirk may not need to court the media to fulfill ambitions for higher office, Redfield says. “I don’t think Mark Kirk wants to be president, and I think he wants to make a difference in policy areas.” □

THE GOOD, THE BAD, THE UGLY

Three other states can offer Illinois lessons on redistricting

by Christopher Z. Mooney



Legislative redistricting is the most important political process that most people know the least about. This insider's game of political baseball provokes intense anxiety from politicians, high-pitched indignation from reformers and yawns from most voters. But as this year's cycle of redistricting approaches, it is a good time to reflect on its profound effect on the fortunes of politicians and political parties, its potential impact on public policy and the possibility for reform.

During the first half of the 20th century, many states ignored the shifting populations in their legislative and congressional districts, so as people left the farm and moved to cities, rural areas had more political clout than their population warranted. That ended with a series of U.S. Supreme Court decisions in the early

1960s. Each state is now required to reconfigure its legislative and congressional districts after each census, so that all districts in a given chamber — such as the U.S. House or Illinois House or Senate — are equal in population.

Now, as states carve out districts for their legislative chambers and congressional delegation to make them conform to the equal-population mandate, they take into their hands the political lives of the state's politicians. And when state legislators decide district lines, as they do in most states, they have considerable influence over their own political fortunes. A lawmaker's district boundaries can mean the difference between a safe seat for the next 10 years or early political retirement. Since people tend to live near others who vote as they do, political mapmakers can imperfectly manipulate the

proportion of Democrats and Republicans in each district — so-called partisan gerrymandering. And congressional district boundaries can have a large impact on a state lawmaker's ability to move up the political ladder.

This sort of arbitrary hardball politics drives good-government reformers crazy: Why should legislative districts be based almost solely on the political interests of the state lawmakers who draw them? But there is a serious and unresolved debate about what criteria — if not political considerations — redistricters should use to configure boundaries. Some argue that existing municipal and county boundaries ought to be followed as much as possible or that communities of interest should be kept together. Some would like to see districts that increase partisan competition or that keep as much of a previous district

together as possible. Forty-one states enshrine two or more of these desiderata into their redistricting laws. Illinois, however, has codified only one such criterion, other than requiring legislative districts to be equal and contiguous: They should be as compact as possible. But how much is “possible” and just what exactly “compact” means are open questions.

A look at Illinois’ current legislative districts suggests that quite a loose definition of “compact” was used in the 2001 redistricting process. In the absence of clear criteria, those who draw the maps must use their own — usually political — rationale for outlining district boundaries.

It is not clear, however, what changes should be made in Illinois’s redistricting process. While no state has really gotten it completely right yet, Illinois may be able to learn from the redistricting reforms in three other states. Before Illinois reformers regroup to take another run at redistricting, they might want to look at what happened in Iowa, Texas, and California. Each offers Illinois a lesson about what to do — and what not to — in reforming legislative redistricting.



Iowa has a unique redistricting system that aims to eliminate political gerrymandering and incumbent protection through a two-step process. First, nonpartisan legislative staffers draft legislative district maps based almost solely on simple population data, with an eye toward not splitting cities and counties between districts, when possible. By law, the redistricters are not even allowed to consider where incumbent lawmakers live. Second, the Iowa General Assembly considers the maps drawn by their staffers on an up-or-down vote. Lawmakers are not allowed to tweak the districts. If legislators vote down a map, their staff can draft another set of districts for legislative consideration. But public and media pressure to keep the process nonpartisan usually shames lawmakers into accepting the first or second plan.

The result is that Iowa has legislative and congressional districts that are more competitive than those in almost any other state. For example, when the current maps were first used in 2002, it put 64 incumbent state legislators (out of a total of 150) in districts with at least one of their colleagues, and two of Iowa’s five U.S. House members were likewise paired up. When lawmakers are in complete charge of their own redistricting, nothing like this sort of incumbent slaughter ever happens. And just as important as the number of incumbent-on-incumbent races, there was no partisan bias in the Iowa map. For instance, the two members of Congress placed in the same district were both Republicans, even though the GOP controlled both chambers of the legislature that approved that map.



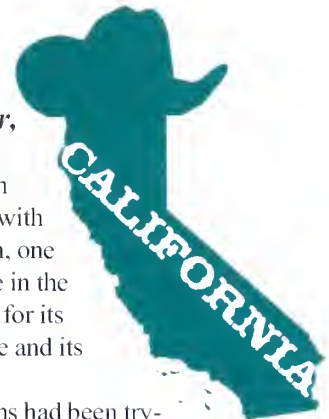
Texas’ legislative maps are approved through the regular lawmaking process. But it isn’t the institution of redistricting that makes the Lone Star State’s most recent experience instructive; it’s how their lawmakers played the redistricting game.

Democrats held a slim majority in the Texas State Legislature in 2001, giving them a free hand to draw their maps. In particular, Republicans were irked by the new congressional maps, and that instigated what can only be called Texas’ “Great Redistricting Wars.”

In the 2002 election, Democrats in Texas won 17 U.S. House seats, compared with the Republicans’ 15 seats. But Texas Republican U.S. Rep. Tom DeLay of Sugarland thought that his state’s congressional delegation should better reflect the percentage of the votes that Texas had given favorite son George Bush in 2000 — 59.3 percent. And DeLay, then the U.S. House majority leader, had plenty of political clout. So when Texas Republicans took control of the state legislature in 2002, he had a novel idea: Why not re-redistrict? That is, he persuaded the legislature to

draw a new set of congressional districts that would be more favorable to his party.

Although no state had ever tried to redistrict more than once a decade, DeLay and his allies had no reason besides tradition to believe they couldn’t do it. A superheated political battle ensued as they moved their new map through the legislative process in 2003, including the spectacle of Democratic state legislators twice fleeing the state to deprive the legislature of a quorum. Opponents fought the plan unsuccessfully all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. In *League of United Latin American Citizens v. Perry*, the court held that states could redraw their congressional — and by extension, their state legislative — districts whenever they wanted to, so long as they did so *at least* once a decade. In the end, the Republicans’ redistricting plan also succeeded at the polls. Following the 2004 elections, the GOP had a 21-11 margin in the Texas delegation in the U.S. House.



This year, California will approach redistricting with a new system, one that is unique in the country both for its independence and its complexity.

Californians had been trying unsuccessfully for decades to remove legislative redistricting from the legislative process. After the 1970 and 1980 censuses, the state’s congressional maps were held up as bad examples of incumbent protection and partisan gerrymandering. Between 1980 and 2005, voters in the Golden State rejected five initiatives for redistricting reform, even one that popular then-Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger campaigned for vigorously. Finally, by a slender margin in 2008, California voters approved Proposition 11, which set out a new process for redistricting state legislative districts. Proposition 11 established the Citizens Redistricting Commission (CRC), and although several other states already use redistricting commissions, the CRC is unusual both in its independence and the complex process used to ensure that independence.

The primary goal of Proposition 11 was to establish a redistricting process that was not controlled by the legislators whose districts were being redrawn. Other states' commissions are closely tied to their state legislatures and political parties. Even members of Arizona's highly touted new commission are selected by legislative leaders. The CRC will be free of any such taint, but achieving that goal is so unwieldy that it threatens to collapse under its own weight.

The process for selecting CRC members goes like this:

- First, the state auditor solicits applications from private citizens for membership on the commission. To be qualified, applicants must have voted in at least two of the three last elections and have not held public office for at least 10 years. They cannot have worked for a political party or candidate or donated more than \$2,000 to a candidate for the legislature or Board of Equalization.

- Second, private citizens interested in serving on the commission send in their applications. The state auditor has received more than 16,000 applications for the 2011 CRC.

- Third, the auditor establishes the Applicant Review Panel (ARP), a three-member team consisting of a Democrat, a Republican and an independent or third-party member.

- Fourth, the ARP reviews the membership applications and selects 60 finalists, 20 each of Republicans, Democrats and independents.

- Fifth, the leader of each of the four state legislative caucuses eliminates two finalists from each of the three partisan groups, leaving 12 in each group.

- Sixth, through a random drawing, the auditor chooses the first eight CRC commissioners from the 36 finalists, drawing three each from the Democrats and Republicans and two from the independents.

- Seventh, these first eight CRC commissioners then select six more commissioners from each of the remaining 28 finalists, two from each of the partisan groups. These final six CRC commissioners are to be chosen based on qualifications and complementary skills.

The resulting CRC will have 14 members: five Democrats, five Republicans, and four others. The CRC then will use 2010 Census data to draft proposals for

state legislative and congressional districts, which are then submitted for public comment for at least 14 days. Following further editing, at least nine members of the CRC — three Democrats, three Republicans and three independents — must approve a plan before it can be adopted. But even then, the process may not be over. The final plan is subject to both a voter referendum and challenges in the state's Supreme Court.

There could be no starker difference between the political conflict and innovation in the name of partisan advantage in Texas and the technocratic, bloodless redistricting institution assiduously designed to avoid any hint of political unfairness in Iowa. And California's hyper-complex process, born out of frustration and what some believe is a broken direct democracy system, is far different from either of the other two states' systems. But those states' widely varying experiences can provide Illinois lawmakers and voters with lessons about reform and the process of redistricting this year.

First, it's clear that Iowa's relatively homogenous demographics and economics would make a straight transfer of its process to Illinois both politically and practically difficult. In particular, racial and ethnic representation needs to be a significant consideration in any legislative map in Illinois, where non-Anglos constitute almost 30 percent of the population. That is less of a factor in Iowa, whose population is 93 percent white.

However, Iowa's experience demonstrates that nonpartisan redistricting can be adopted and have an impact on electoral competitiveness. Although Iowa has only 1 percent of the United States' population, its political maps generated 10 percent of the competitive congressional races in the country in the early 2000s. Furthermore, even though Iowa lawmakers crave reelection just as much as their opposite numbers in Illinois, public and media pressure keeps them from circumventing the process, even if it will end their political careers. That proves that public attention and concern can influence even this most arcane legislation.

Probably the most important lesson Illinois lawmakers can learn from Texas is that the Lone Star State's Redistricting Wars were caused by political overreach-

Although Iowa has only 1 percent of the United States' population, its political maps generated 10 percent of the competitive congressional races in the country in the early 2000s.

ing by both Democrats and Republicans. If Democrats had tried to reflect better the state's political distribution in 2001, they might not have raised DeLay's ire. The extremely gerrymandered Democratic maps incited the Republicans to try their unprecedented attempt at re-redistricting and persuaded Texas voters to accept it. On the other hand, the Republicans' innovation, now approved by the U.S. Supreme Court, may have opened a Pandora's Box. Democrats may find themselves using this new tool at some point in the future. Furthermore, the lack of decorum and hyper-partisanship that the whole episode generated left the Texas legislature open to national ridicule and an even lower level of public support than in most states.

In fact, Illinois lawmakers may have already understood that lesson. Even though Illinois continued to trend strongly Democratic, 10 Republicans won U.S. House seats in the first congressional election after new maps were drawn, compared with nine Democrats. Democrats might well have worried about their chances throughout the rest of the decade because the 19 congressional districts were widely understood to be gerrymandered to protect incumbents. But even though the state was seen as ripe for following Texas' lead in re-redistricting when Democrats took over the governor's mansion and the state Senate in 2002, the Democrats demurred. Perhaps the political bloodbath in Texas gave them pause.

Finally, what are the redistricting lessons from California? First, as in Texas, the Golden State's experience shows that political frustration can lead to unorthodox ideas. Furthermore, the rejection of multiple redistricting initiatives demon-

Will it be different this time?

Illinois' history with redistricting does not inspire great hope for statesmanship this year. The 1970 Illinois Constitution gives redistricting authority first to the regular legislative process. A set of maps for U.S. House, state Senate, and state House districts can be developed and introduced as bills in the General Assembly, and once passed, be signed or vetoed by the governor. The signed bill or bills define the districts for those chambers for the next five election cycles.

But if there's no agreement on one or all of the three maps by the summer, a bipartisan commission would be impaneled to deal with the problem. If the commission can't agree on the maps by early fall, the process goes to the infamous random tiebreaker: adding one partisan member to the commission by drawing a name from a hat — literally. That leaves one party in complete control of the process. Although the writers of the 1970 Constitution thought that this game of political chicken would scare the parties into a compromise, that has only happened once: in the 1971 redistricting. In 1981, 1991 and 2001, the parties preferred to take their chances on complete control rather than compromise.

This year, though, things may be different. The November 2010 election determined that for the first time under the current state Constitution, a single party will control all three legs of the redistricting process. That means there probably will be no commission and no name plucked out of the hat. In February, the

Democrats will take the census data and their mapmaking computer programs into a quiet, locked room and draw the maps that they think will give them the best political advantage for the next decade. There will likely be some legislative hearings and some GOP handwringing on the subject, but unlike previous redistricting processes, it likely will not be a long drawn out and public process. It probably will be finished by April or May with little media fanfare.

But just because voters may read little about the process in the newspapers does not mean it will be any fairer or have less impact on the state, or that reformers will be any less upset about it. During the last year and a half, there have been legislative hearings and various proposals and even petitions passed for a redistricting voter initiative. But those efforts have come up short, whether because of the inability of reformers to inspire citizen and legislator interest, or by the design of those who prefer the status quo.

Even though this year's redistricting will be carried out under the current rules, reformers need not wait another 10 years to try to improve the process. In fact, the coming legislative session may be the best time to make changes. With the proper public relations — and assuming that the new maps end up as gerrymandered as the 2001 maps — voters can be educated and mobilized to reform the process for 2021. Just as important, because sitting lawmakers will be as far away from their next redistricting as they will ever be, they may more easily be compelled to act.

Christopher Z. Mooney

strates voters' deep suspicion of the process, a suspicion that policymakers should notice. Even though redistricting remains one of the most incomprehensible components of the American political process, citizens seem to be paying more attention to it in recent years, with the help of aggrieved political parties, other groups and the media. If voters do not accept that their representatives' political districts are legitimate, they may not accept the legitimacy of their representative institutions. Perhaps some of the unprecedented disapproval of government in recent years can be traced in part to that.

But perhaps the most important lesson from California's experience is more direct: Keep reform simple. Even if Californians manage to redraw their maps through their new complicated system, voters with a grievance may claim that the process lacks clarity and accountability. While technocratic reformers may applaud the independence of the CRC, the fact that its members will be largely unknown to the public may lead voters to worry about behind-the-scenes political mischief.

The extreme — and extremely different — redistricting reforms and experiences

of these three states also show that despite the arcane and intensely political nature of the redistricting process, change can happen. While it's too late to reform Illinois' redistricting institutions for this year, advocates of change should strike now. Moving on to other good-government causes and waiting 10 years before tackling redistricting again would be a strategic mistake. Ignorance and apathy are on the side of those who favor the status quo. They can just wait out the reformers until it's too late — again — in 2021.

But perhaps the best lesson that Illinoisans can draw from these states' redistricting experiences is that major reforms are necessarily not the answer — or at least not the first one. Rather than a total overhaul of the redistricting process, the first step toward reform should be a serious discussion about what a redistricting process should attempt to achieve.

Currently, Illinois' legislative districts must be equally populated, contiguous and compact, but in practice, "compact" seems to mean virtually nothing. Illinois could begin its redistricting overhaul by deciding on clearer redistricting criteria, just as 41 other states have already done.

Should Illinois legislative districts match local government boundaries and other types of communities whenever possible? Should districts enhance political competition, which might be good for keeping lawmakers responsive to voters' needs and bring fresh blood into the Statehouse more often? Regardless of the criteria, future Illinois map-drawers need guidance in clear statutes, rules and/or constitutional provisions.

In fact, establishing redistricting criteria may be politically easier than overhauling the entire process, and it may be more difficult to block, since better-defined criteria typically are less threatening to the status quo and more acceptable to voters. And strategy aside, even if it would be possible to change the redistricting process — even to something as attractive to good-government reformers as the Iowa process — doing so without agreeing upon and spelling out what voters want out of that process would likely change the results very little. □

Christopher Z. Mooney is professor of political studies in the Institute of Government and Public Affairs at the University of Illinois Springfield.

Final job

New University of Illinois president faces daunting challenges
in his last position in higher education

by Mike Riopell

Nearing the end of his long academic career, Michael Hogan likely has found his final job in the president's office of the University of Illinois.

This could be his hardest job yet.

Hogan took the helm of Illinois' flagship university July 1, 2010, at a time when state government owed the institution millions of dollars and an admissions scandal was still fresh in the minds of state lawmakers, the school's leadership and, probably, prospective students.

All of that, though, is at least part of what attracted Hogan to Illinois.

Leaving his job as president of the seven-campus University of Connecticut, Hogan moved closer to his family roots in Iowa. The University of Illinois was a bigger university than Connecticut, and Hogan could get back to the Big Ten, where he had spent much of his career.

But more than anything, Hogan saw the challenges at the "amazingly complex" University of Illinois as an opportunity to make a big difference.

"I thought it was a very challenging job," Hogan says. "It's come through some hard times politically and in terms of leadership and financially. So I just liked the idea of the challenges.

"This was just such an unexpected but attractive opportunity," he says.

The opportunity was unexpected because no one foresaw the admissions scandal that would lead to a vacancy in the president's job.

A series of *Chicago Tribune* stories in 2009 revealed that politicians across Illinois were vouching for students who had applied for entrance into the university. Those politicians were often state lawmakers, and some were friends of former Gov. Rod Blagojevich.

They also controlled the school's state funding, and the students they vouched for were often admitted, even if they didn't meet academic standards.

Gov. Pat Quinn launched a state investigation as a result.

Then-President B. Joseph White and Urbana-Champaign Chancellor Richard Herman resigned their posts, as did seven of the nine trustees appointed by the governor.

After a period of interim leadership by former President Stanley Ikenberry, the newly constituted board of trustees hired Hogan in May.

"I think our board is very anxious to put that behind us. I'm anxious to put it behind us, too," Hogan says.

In an effort to quell politicians' influence in the process, university leadership created a policy that only allows students' parents to inquire about admissions status.

A recent faculty review of the policy suggested it was working. The school still tracks when people other than parents ask about a student's admission status. Since the policy was put in place, only 15 have.

Hogan says he thinks the scandal has mostly been dealt with.

"I think we've addressed that problem and the issues and pressures that led to it in the first place," he says.

Now, Hogan is trying to settle into his new job as the 18th president in the university's history.

Before he became president at Connecticut, Hogan was vice president and provost and a professor of history at the University of Iowa. Before then, he moved through the ranks at Ohio State University as a faculty member, department chair and dean.

His bachelor's degree in English comes from the University of Northern Iowa, and his advanced degrees in history come from the University of Iowa.

Urbana-Champaign is much different from the main Connecticut campus in Storrs, "a tiny, tiny, tiny little town" with no gas station, Hogan says.

"I'm enjoying it very much," he says of Urbana. "It's a great place."

Trustee and former Springfield Mayor Karen Hasara says she liked that Hogan rose from a rank-and-file university professor to university president.

"I think the main thing was the depth and breadth of his experience," Hasara says. "He came up through the ranks."



University of Illinois President Michael Hogan

Plus, Hasara says, Hogan was familiar with running a university with a big medical program, such as the University of Illinois'. And he'd dealt with budget troubles before.

"Granted, ours are probably worse," Hasara says.

Still learning the job, Hogan now splits most of his time between Urbana-Champaign and Chicago, with occasional trips to Springfield.

"As time goes by, I think my schedule will get a little more organized, a little less hectic," Hogan says.

And if the admissions scandal were the only challenge Hogan faced, his schedule would probably be a lot less hectic. But six months into the year, the state still owed the university millions of dollars from the previous fiscal year. That means the school's state funding for the current fiscal year — nearly half over — was zero.

"Obviously, the state's in just dire financial straits," Hogan says.

In past years, tight budgets for universities have meant skyrocketing tuition. At public schools across Illinois, tuition and fees have more than doubled during the last decade.

Especially mindful of those problems are lawmakers who control funding for universities. State Rep. Mike Boland, an East Moline Democrat who chairs the House Higher Education Committee, says administrators such as Hogan have to lower costs.

"I'm not looking for students to do any more," Boland says. "Tuition is already hard enough on students."

Hogan says he knows he has to cut costs, a process that could be "difficult," "challenging" and "painful."

"What it really means for us is: How do we reshape the university and stay great, even if it means we have a smaller footprint, you might say," Hogan says. "We do fewer things but still try to do them well."

Recent talks of merging several small programs, including the College of Media and the Graduate School of Library Information Sciences, were halted after leaders determined the move wouldn't save much money.

Hogan says that instead, he wants to target the salaries of administrators. He says there hasn't been a lot of growth at the very top of the school's leadership.

"But there has been some growth below that," Hogan says. "Assistants to this and associates to that, those kinds of titles."

As Hogan tries to tackle those positions, he's also had to answer questions about his own salary, which starts at \$620,000.

White, the former president, earned far less, \$450,000 a year.

And if Hogan stays five years, he'll earn a \$225,000 bonus.

Boland says that high of a salary sends the wrong message and that universities have to start sharing in sacrifices that the state budget is causing elsewhere across Illinois.

"If they aren't, we may have to look at doing something about it," Boland says.

Hogan says he can find some savings in some of the duplicated functions now being performed at the university's three campuses. Human resources, information technology, communications and other nonacademic "business functions" might be ripe for consolidation.

"We know the numbers have grown," Hogan says of administrative staff. "The first thing we have to do is not just identify the numbers in aggregate but exactly where they are and what they're doing and how we might look to combine and consolidate some functions."

Those decisions will take time, though, and the university faces an immediate cash-flow problem. This year, public schools, including the University of Illinois, asked state lawmakers for the authority to borrow money to cover their bills.

The state is so far behind in its own payments, higher education administrators argued, that they needed to take out loans to make payroll.

"It's causing some alarm and concern among higher education leaders in the state," Hogan says.

Much to the chagrin of anti-borrowing lawmakers, the General Assembly gave the authority to take out loans for a temporary period. The University of Illinois didn't end up needing the authority this year. But it might next year and will probably ask for the same power again.

"And we would probably support doing that," Hogan says. "We don't like to."

If universities do borrow money, they'll owe interest on those loans down the road. And the state's financial situation isn't improving quickly.

Hogan's tenure will almost undoubtedly be marked by difficult decisions such as this one. Hasara says the board hopes Hogan will stay on the job for at least five years.

As a student of history, Hogan can perhaps look to some of the people he's studied as models for dealing with difficult leadership situations.

His work includes a book, *A Cross of Iron: Harry S. Truman and the Origins of the National Security State*. Hogan also consulted on a PBS documentary about World War II-era leader George Marshall.

No one is suggesting that Hogan faces the same challenges as Truman and Marshall. But he says he can learn from them in some ways.

"I think I have seen how they've worked inside a very complicated and difficult administrative, organizational and political environment," Hogan says. "I don't want to compare the job that I do to the enormity of the jobs that they do. But on a small — much smaller — scale, we do confront many of the same issues, like making budget choices."

Sometimes, reading about historic leaders doubles as leisure time for Hogan as he adjusts to the new job.

He says he spends occasional free moments reading the *New York Times* or *New Yorker* magazine, sometimes scanning his e-mail while watching football games on Sundays.

"Well, there hasn't been a lot of free time," Hogan says.

University Trustee Hasara says Hogan has been "so available" to meet with people throughout the university. And he maintains a blog called "PrezRelease" that has included posts about charity activities and even the doings of the university bass-fishing club.

While some of the specifics about what he'll do over the next years as president are unclear, Hogan says he's certain that the president's office at the University of Illinois will be the final stop of his career. There will be no more academic jobs for him.

"The answer is a definite no," Hogan says.

"There's no up from here. This is as up as it gets." □

Mike Riopell is the state government writer for the suburban Chicago Daily Herald.



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Lawrence Hansen

Among his many qualities, he was known for his gentle demeanor and finely honed sense of humor. But there was no fiercer advocate for government responsibility and ethics.

Hansen, vice president of the Joyce Foundation in Chicago and chairman of the *Illinois Issues* Advisory Board, died of cancer November 15 at his home in River Forest. He was 69.

"Larry was a good, optimistic and kind person. He was a great colleague with a sense of humor and a personal and professional focus on ensuring good and open and fair government, and that was his life's work," says Ellen Alberding, president of the Joyce Foundation.

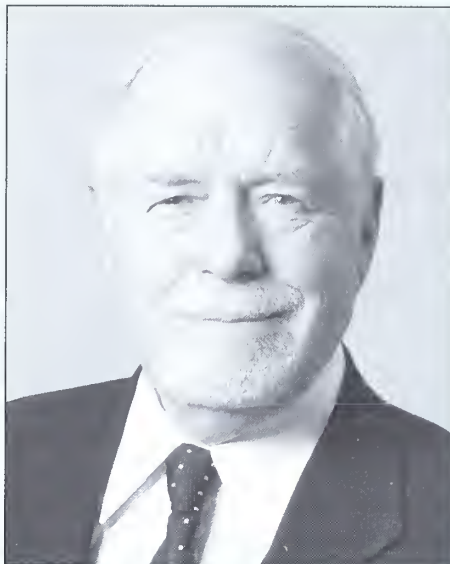
A former adviser to Vice President Walter Mondale and U.S. Sen. Adlai Stevenson III, Hansen joined the Joyce Foundation in 1994. He launched the philanthropic organization's Money and Politics program that year.

Hansen focused most recently on reforming redistricting, the process by which state legislatures redraw political boundaries after each U.S. census. But he saw redistricting reform as just one piece of a broader reform agenda that included campaign financing, judicial elections and government transparency and accountability.

"In the more than 45 years that I have known Larry Hansen, he was at all times a public servant — in the truest and highest meaning of that term," former state Comptroller Dawn Clark Netsch said in a prepared statement. "He cared deeply that government should serve all its citizens fairly and honestly, and he was determined to do his part, and did."

"With Larry you had a partner. To conceptualize, to brainstorm — a sounding board," said Cynthia Canary, director of the Illinois Campaign for Political Reform. "He was a such a mentor that when he could make the case for investing foundation dollars, you also got this champion who was always excited about the work an organization might do and would always take the time to talk about strategies for moving the ball forward."

Before joining the Joyce Foundation, Hansen was a research professor at



Lawrence Hansen

George Washington University's National Center for Communication Studies. He was the catalyst behind the Midwest Democracy Network, a consortium of organizations with related issues such as campaign reform, open government and judicial independence.

Illinois Issues also benefitted from Hansen's efforts. "Larry was a good friend to the magazine and a mentor to me," says Executive Editor Dana Heupel. "We will greatly miss his humor, his wisdom and his sage advice."

Hansen joined the *Illinois Issues* Advisory Board in 2003 and was elected chairman in 2007.

"He was an outstanding chair of the advisory board," says Mike Lawrence, who succeeds Hansen as chairman. "He had great enthusiasm for the mission of the magazine. ... He was an inspiration to those of us who worked with him."

From 1983-1989, Hansen was senior fellow and vice president for public programs at the Roosevelt Center for American Policy Studies in Washington, D.C. which he helped to create. He also served in 1982-83 as a special assistant and political adviser to Mondale, prior to Mondale's announcement of his campaign for president. From 1974-1981, Hansen served as an assistant to former U.S. Sen. Adlai E. Stevenson III.

"We traveled the campaign trail together all over this country," Mondale said in a news release. "We talked about

everything. Larry was gifted, funny, wise and competitive. ... He had this gift of calming down matters that had gotten out of control."

"Larry's life was devoted to public service," says Stevenson. "For Larry, public service was more than a citizen's duty. It was also an intellectual challenge and occupation. Larry had a wry sense of humor, a capacious memory and a talent for articulation that made good use of his political experience for the amusement and edification of his many friends."

In the early 1970s, he was a top aide to Illinois state schools Superintendent Michael Bakalis. Hansen and Bakalis wrote a book together on school reform. *A Strategy for Excellence: Reaching for New Standards in Education* was published in 1974. He also was the author of numerous other publications.

"Larry Hansen was one of those rare people who took issues, politics and history seriously and actually did something concrete to make things better," Bakalis said in a news release. "But he also kept everything in perspective with his great sense of humor. His was a life of purpose, and he made a difference."

He was a delegate to the Peace Corps Founding and Organizing Conference in 1961, and in 1962, he worked with American and Peruvian student leaders to construct the first modern sanitation facilities in two barrios of Lima.

Hansen, who grew up in Elgin, was a distinguished graduate of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, where he was Student Senate president, receiving a bachelor's degree in history and political science in 1963. He attended the University of Illinois College of Law and Heidelberg University in Germany.

He is survived by his wife, Margaret "Marge"; his mother, Jeanne Hansen; sisters Janis (David) Duewel and Candace; brother Lance (Sue); brother- and sister-in-law John and Patricia Brown; and many nieces and nephews.

Memorials may be sent to: the University YMCA at the University of Illinois, 1001 S. Wright St., Champaign, IL 6182; or to *Illinois Issues*, HRB 10, University of Illinois Springfield, One University Plaza, Springfield, IL 62703.

Lincoln Museum director hired



Eileen Mackevich

Eileen Mackevich, former executive director of the national Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission, was hired in December as the executive director of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum.

Mackevich was co-founder and president of the Chicago Humanities Festival and spent 18 years as a broadcast journalist and talk show host on Chicago Public Radio.

"Eileen Mackevich's proven track record and work coordinating the nation's observance of Abraham Lincoln's 200th birthday make her the best person to oversee one of the most popular presidential museums in the nation," said Gov. Pat Quinn in a prepared statement.

Illinois Historic Preservation Agency Director Jan Grimes has been acting director of the museum since 2008, when then-director Rick Beard was fired after a shoplifting arrest.

Mackevich will be paid \$150,000 (minus pay for 24 furlough days).

"I am beyond excited," Mackevich says. "When I was told that this was a likelihood, that the governor ... would likely approve, I couldn't get to sleep."

Mackevich says she's eager to learn from the staff now that she has been appointed. She says she knows through directing the bicentennial commission that Lincoln has an international following. "I learned that Lincoln belongs to everyone."

Mackevich has a bachelor's degree from the University of Pennsylvania and a master's degree in British history from Northeastern Illinois University.

Honors and awards

Dexter Chaney, a third-grade teacher in Chicago, received the Milken National Educator Award.

The Martin A. Ryerson Elementary School teacher will receive a \$25,000 prize.

"He serves as a role model to not only the children in his classroom but to every child in the school," said principal Lorenzo Russell in a prepared statement. "Dexter is highly visible to every student because of his tireless efforts, his work in the community and his participation in after-school and extracurricular

activities. Our students know they can count on him." According to that November release, before Chaney's arrival, Ryerson had a 37 percent average for third-graders meeting or exceeding grade level. That number has climbed to 65 percent, and Chaney's students have met or exceeded expectations at a rate of 90 percent. The Milken National Educator Award is given annually to teachers demonstrating exemplary skills and a personal commitment to education. Nationally, 55 teachers were named Milken Educators this year.

Shifts at the top

Jerry Stermer is once again working in Gov. Pat Quinn's administration after resigning as chief of staff in the midst of an ethics controversy during election season.

Stermer, who will be paid \$125,000 as a senior adviser, sent campaign-related e-mails from his state account. He reported the incidents to the Office of the Executive Inspector General.

The *Chicago Sun-Times* reported that

Inspector General James Wright was removed from his position the day Quinn was briefed on the report Wright's office made on Stermer's violations.

Quinn said it was Stermer's decision to leave. Quinn's office said of Stermer's return: "Jerry Stermer will advise Governor Quinn on a variety of subject areas where he has had a lifetime of experience, including human services, health care and the state budget."

OBIT

Richard Myers

The veteran state lawmaker from Colechester died December 1 after a battle with cancer. He was 62.

Myers, a Republican who had served for 16 years, was re-elected to a new term in November.

He served as the Republican spokesman for the House Agriculture and Conservation and the Higher Education-Appropriation committees and on several other committees.

"Rep. Myers was an outstanding legislator and a friend," said Republican Leader Tom Cross in a prepared statement. "He always kept his family, his district and our state as his top priorities and represented them exceptionally well. My thoughts and prayers are with his family during their time of grief."

The farmer and businessman was a graduate of Western Illinois University with a degree in agronomy.

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Portrayal of workers shows 'hostility'

James Krohe Jr.'s essay "Managing to get by" (see *Illinois Issues*, November 2010, page 28) is a mish-mash of unsupported opinions and unsubstantiated assertions.

Krohe appears to contend that state government isn't working well because its misbegotten middle managers are "saddled with indifferent or incompetent underlings." The use of the term "underlings" neatly demonstrates Krohe's hostility toward front-line employees whom he portrays as universally bad and impossible to fire.

What evidence does he submit to back up his snide assertions about some 30,000 employees? Did he spend a minute walking a unit at a psychiatric hospital or observing the care given to a veteran at a state home? Did he walk a cellblock with a correctional officer or drive down a mean street with a parole agent or child protective worker investigating abuse?

If he did, he would quickly learn that front-line state employees are working doggedly to provide these critically impor-

tant public services — despite a broken state budget and chronic mismanagement that has left Illinois with the smallest-in-the-nation state workforce per capita.

Today, with more calls to the child abuse hotline, more requests for unemployment benefits, food stamps and Medicaid, and more prison inmates than ever before, the service of front-line employees has never been so urgently needed.

At the same time, the budget crisis and staff shortages have forced employees to work enormous amounts of overtime in prisons and veterans homes, shoulder staggering human service caseloads and scramble just to answer the phones and keep up with paperwork.

Fixing the budget and adequately funding state agencies to meet the needs of Illinois residents — not mindlessly scapegoating state workers — should be top priority for policymakers, elected officials and opinion leaders.

Krohe also fails to present any data to support his contention that employees cannot be terminated because of union protections. Instead, absent any evidence, he left readers with the impression that state employees can't be let go for cause.

That's false. But "cause" is the operative word here. Employees can be and are dismissed — whether they fail to make it through their probationary period, resign rather than face discharge or actually are discharged. But they can't be fired just because they are from the wrong political party, because of their sexual orientation or for any other nonmeritorious reason.

AFSCME ensures its members who work for state government receive due process should they be subject to discipline. And we've never seen any evidence that this fundamental right to a fair hearing before being terminated from one's job has hampered any governor from managing state operations.

To the contrary, AFSCME has been and remains one of the strongest voices for maintaining and strengthening the vital public services needed now more than ever by Illinois families struggling in the recession, for protecting the standard of living of the men and women who provide those services and for a responsible budget to adequately fund them.

Heury Bayer
Executive director
AFSCME Council 31

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Charles N. Wheeler III



Lawmakers had a productive two-year session

by Charles N. Wheeler III

As the 96th Illinois General Assembly returns to Springfield early this month for its final days, an unusually crowded agenda could await lawmakers: gambling expansion, abolition of the death penalty, approval of medical marijuana, clean coal, maybe even a vote on higher taxes.

Even if none of these high-profile issues come to a vote before the new legislature takes over at noon on January 12, the outgoing General Assembly already ranks as one of the more productive in recent memory.

Sure, lawmakers largely punted on the state's No. 1 problem: a budget deficit that could reach \$15 billion or more for the incoming legislators as they try to craft a spending plan for FY 2012, which begins next July 1.

But on a number of other major issues, majority Democrats and minority Republicans placed the public interest above partisan gain to enact significant legislation. Consider the record in just three critical areas:

- **Pension reform.** By votes of 92-17 in the House and 48-6 in the Senate, legislators last March approved the most far-reaching changes ever to the five state-funded pension systems. From now on, all new state employees, university professors, legislators, judges, downstate public school teachers and local government workers except police and firefighters will have to stay on the job longer

On a number of other major issues, majority Democrats and minority Republicans placed the public interest above partisan gain to enact significant legislation.

and will receive smaller pensions in retirement. Creating two-tiered retirement systems, one for existing workers and a less generous plan for new hires, should save the state more than \$71 billion over the next 35 years, according to actuarial estimates by the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability.

Lawmakers last month endorsed similar changes for local police and firefighters, along with provisions to ensure sound funding by local governments. That measure awaits Gov. Pat Quinn's action at this writing.

The changes did not go as far as some wished, for example, by substituting a 401(k)-type retirement plan for the traditional defined benefit plan or cutting benefits for current workers and retirees. But switching to 401(k)s would carry

significant upfront costs, studies showed, and reducing current employees' benefits might run afoul of a constitutional provision safeguarding pension rights and most certainly would trigger a protracted court battle over the guarantee's exact meaning.

Instead, legislators seem to have found a happy medium, given that public employee unions decried creating "second-class" citizenship for new workers, while some leaders in the business community complained the reforms did not go far enough to place state workers on equal footing with employees in the private sector, for whom pensions are much more tenuous.

- **Education reform.** As part of an ultimately unsuccessful effort to win federal Race to the Top funds, the legislature rewrote key provisions of the state School Code to track individual student achievement more accurately and to link student growth more closely to teacher and principal evaluations.

Under the new longitudinal data system being implemented by the Illinois State Board of Education, individual measures such as test scores, grade advancement and graduation rates will be maintained for every public school student from kindergarten through college to assess how well each student is progressing. And for the first time, individual students' progress must be "a significant factor in" rating teaching

performance as part of educators' overall evaluations.

Teachers' unions opposed the idea that a teacher's grades should be tied to those of his or her students but had to settle for exempting the evaluations from the state's Freedom of Information law.

Lawmakers also doubled, to 120, the cap on charter schools — up to 75 permitted in Chicago and 45 elsewhere — and eased the regulations under which would-be teachers may be certified without following the traditional education school route.

Although Illinois missed out on the \$4.4 billion in federal education grants, the reforms remain on the books, potentially yielding solid improvements in Illinois schools.

Notes state Superintendent Christopher Koch: "We still intend to develop new rigorous teacher and principal evaluation systems, as required by state law. ... We are still committed to developing a comprehensive longitudinal data system to assist us in better preparing students for college and careers."

- **Ethics reform.** Responding almost allegation-by-allegation to the federal indictment of former Gov. Rod Blagojevich, the legislature outlawed pay-to-play practices, tightened disclosure and conflict-of-interest regulations for appointees to a host of powerful boards and commissions, toughened state purchasing requirements, strengthened the state's Open Records Law and imposed the first-ever limits on campaign contributions.

While some reformers grouched that more should be done, in particular, limiting legislative leaders' ability to pump unlimited cash into competitive state Senate and House races, other long-time legislative watchers were impressed that any limits were coming to Illinois, long known as the "Wild West" of campaign finance, where anybody could give anything to anyone.

Pensions, education and ethics. In each area, outgoing lawmakers and Quinn enacted ground-breaking reform after years of failed efforts in prior sessions. Add to the trio the state's first major con-

struction program in nine years — the \$31 billion Illinois Jobs Now public works initiative — and the historic House and Senate votes last month to authorize civil unions in Illinois — a bipartisan recognition that all the state's citizens are worthy of equal treatment under the law — and the result is an impressive two-year scorecard for the 96th General Assembly.

And that's not even counting arguably this legislative crop's finest hour, the impeachment and removal of Blagojevich, the most corrupt and least competent chief executive in memory. Blago's ouster, accomplished within the first month of the legislature's two-year session, was a tough act to follow, but as the record shows, it also served as a harbinger of accomplishments to come.

May the women and men who take their oath of office on January 12 — the 97th General Assembly — do as well. □

Charles N. Wheeler III is director of the Public Affairs Reporting program at the University of Illinois Springfield.

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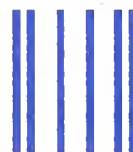
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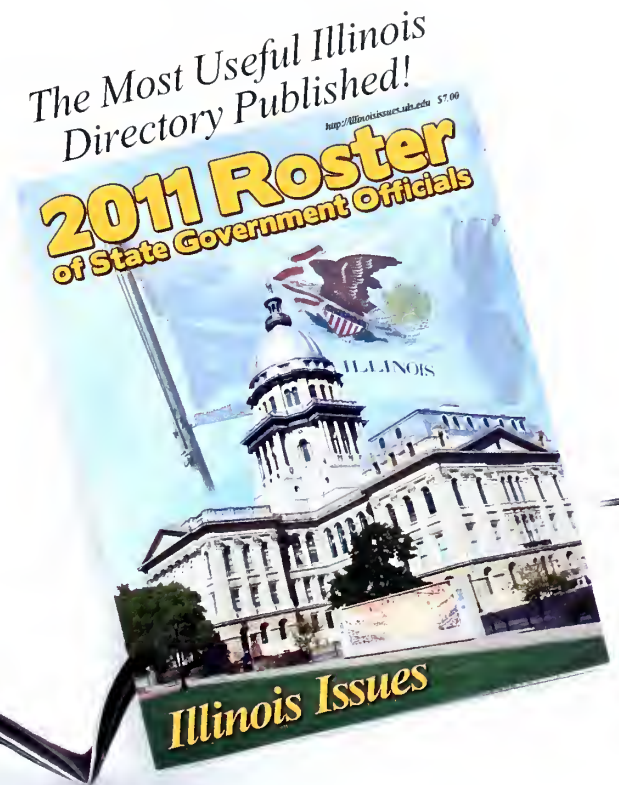
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